

THE
DOCTRINE OF UNION
BETWEEN
CHRIST and the BELIEVER;

BEING THE
Substance of *Thirteen* SERMONS:

Wherein are consider'd,

- I. The NATURE of this UNION.
- II. The COMMENCEMENT of it.
- III. What is meant by the BAND, MEAN,
or CEMENT thereof. And,
- IV. The happy EFFECTS, or glorious
CONSEQUENCES, of this UNION.

Attempting to explain the doctrine, to remove
the difficulties which have hitherto attended it, and
to answer some objections which may be rais'd against
the method herein pursued.

Together with
Some remarks and improvements interspersed, suited to
the design.

By *THOMAS FLOWER.*

Published at the unanimous request of the church
under his care.

L O N D O N,

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TO THE
CHURCH of CHRIST *meeting*
in Unicorn-Yard, Tooley-
Street, Southwark.

What the Apostle Paul sent as salutation to his beloved Timothy, my soul earnestly desireth for you, even grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear Brethren in Christ,

AS you are, through the disposal of divine providence, my care in the Lord, so I would always have a suitable concern for the glory of God in your spiritual welfare. I frequently reflect on that solemn transaction be-

iv DEDICATION.

tween us, perform'd in the name of the Lord, and before him and his Servants, which fixed us in that relation we now bear to one another.

There have not yet been four years, since I engaged in the pastoral office, in which time, how I have behaved in that function, is best known to God and you ; conscious I am, it has been with much weakness, though, I hope, with integrity, as assisted by your prayers to God, on the one hand, and your counsels on the other. It is but a little time in the whole, that I have laboured among you in the word and doctrine, according to the abilities God hath been graciously pleased to furnish me with ; and less time, by far, I had laboured, when you thought proper, once and again, to desire me to print what is contain'd in the following sheets.

The service which you have repeated your requests to me to engage
in,

DEDICATION. v

in, is not without its difficulties. This age, famed for learning and politeness, may, nevertheless, be defective both in candour and christian charity : no man may now expect to publish his performances in this way, without having them rigorously examined, whether they are conformable to the standard, or, what is worse, whether they may not be turned to the disadvantage of religion.

Obscurity and silence, as far, and as much as may be with a good conscience, are often attended with calmness and ease ; whereas, on the other hand, an appearing in print, and exhibiting to the publick a few things, tho' in some measure adapted, and wholly design'd for real good, has been the remote occasion of great disquietude to an author, for a long season.

The difficulties named, also a consciousness of my own weakness, and that there may be many imperfections

vi *DEDICATION.*

fections in what you receiv'd in love, together with a former aversion thus to appear to the world, are what retarded my promising to comply with your request. These obstructions were, however, in some measure removed, or over-ballanced by probable advantages; or, at least, I have so far surmounted them, as to attempt what you desired. And herein

A serious attending to your request, as the voice of a church of Christ, and the reasons with which you thought proper to enforce it, together with, I trust, a humble, yet hearty desire, by all means to seek the promoting of the glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer, in the good of souls, have induced me to make thus publick, the substance of those sermons on Union, as not knowing but that in your repeated requests, there might be a providential call to this service.

Possibly

DEDICATION. vii

Possibly you may have had many reasonings in your own minds, concerning the cause of my delay, not only in giving an answer to your requests, by intimating my design to comply therewith, but also in not hastening to publish since. In answer hereunto, I would say, the things mentioned have been hindrances, and, sometimes, there has been a secret hope, that amongst the many things which are daily publishing, there might have some piece appeared on this subject, more useful to the publick, than I can expect this to be, and also satisfactory to you; and then my manuscript might shortly have been laid in the dust and forgotten, as well as the author thereof. But now, my friends, here is presented to you somewhat in answer to your desires. 'Tis true, it is but a small part of thirteen sermons; but the reasons thereof are as follow.

The

viii *DEDICATION.*

The brevity of my notes used in preaching, which contain very little of enlargement on any head, and therefore, consequently, many things which might be thought pertinent in the illustration of some parts of the doctrine, when delivered from the pulpit, are now lost, my memory not serving to recollect them. Again,

Many things very useful in delivery, as setting any part in various different lights, in order to your having a clearer apprehension of it; or the minute accommodation of the scriptures brought for illustration, or confirmation, are not so necessary in print, where persons can, at any time, review what went before.

Suffer me here to add, that the following pages contain all the parts treated of from the pulpit, though contracted; and further I would subjoin, that in what most depends on the argument, there I have said most, avoiding as much as possibly,

DEDICATION. ix

I could, with any tolerable clearness, all manner of repetitions, except the passages of scripture, which are equally pertinent in the several branches of the subject. And

Now, my friends, 'tis my earnest desire, followed by humble prayer to the Lord, that this performance may be rendred, not only what you expect it, in instruction and comfort, but much more abundantly; that while you read, the Holy Spirit may open your understandings, seal your interest in the blessings herein treated of, and fill you with joy and peace in believing. Yea, I must say, 'tis my heart's desire, that it may be render'd useful unto, and that God may be glorified by you and all others who shall peruse it.

However what follows may be received by, or appear to others, is unknown to me; *secret things belong unto the Lord*; but this I know, unless my heart has greatly deceiv'd

a

me,

x *DEDICATION.*

me, that your welfare and theirs is what I earnestly desire, and greatly long for. Souls appear to me very precious: when my eyes, or thoughts are turned upon the wicked and openly prophane, pity greatly affects me: when those who appear to have obtained hope, through grace, are the objects of my view, it gives me pleasure, and I love them; each of which seems to increase, in proportion to an apprehended likeness to, or the degree in which their souls are drawn forth after Jesus in love. And,

When mine eyes behold you, my friends, my important charge here, and my hoped for crown of rejoicing another day, I cannot but value you, and ardently endeavour to promote, by all appointed and laudable means, your best interests. Though many should, through ignorance of the things treated of in the following lines, be ready to ridicule and despise them,
yet

DEDICATION. xi

yet it is to be hoped, that, through the divine blessing, you will, in reading of them, have your minds refreshed, your souls enlarged, and your desires drawn forth after God in Christ.

May we each of us, having obtained hope, through grace, that we are united to Christ, endeavour to walk in humbleness of mind, with all diligence, suitable to the greatness of such a privilege. Let us always remember, as is the stock, such ought the branches to be ; and, that such branches are pleasing to God, through Christ, honourable in their stations ; and also, that such, men of the world expect all those who profess themselves christians to be. The eyes of the world are upon us ; both men and devils watch for our halting ; let us therefore be watchful, and seek to honour the root that bears us, in whom there is a fulness of all needful supply. I earnestly request
you

xii *DEDICATION.*

you to join your prayers with mine, to the Lord, that he would render these labours abundantly useful to your own souls, and the souls of all that read them ; and that God may yet be more abundantly glorified by us in all things.

Desiring of, endeavouring after, and praying for, your spiritual welfare ; your growth *in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

I subscribe my self,

Dear Brethren,

your Servant,

for Jesus sake,

Crucifix-Lane, Southwark,
January 4th, 17³⁸.

THO. FLOWER.



JOHN xiv. 19.

---Because I live, ye shall live also.

THE author of these words is the Lord Jesus Christ, God incarnate, being the *Logos*, or word, united to human nature, or having assumed it, *John* i. 1, 14. The recorder of them was *John*, the beloved disciple, whom Jesus personally called to follow him^a; he whom Jesus delighted to honour, or to whom he was wont to shew particular respect, vouchsafe peculiar favours. Some have thought, it was at his marriage, Jesus wrought the miracle of turning water into wine: though there is a tradition, that this disciple lived unmarried^b. Certain it is, he leaned on Jesus's breast, had great intimacy with him, and is noted as that

^a Matt. iv. 21.
p. 715.

^b *Roberts's Key to the Bible*, Ed. 2.

disciple *whom Jesus loved* ^c. Jesus spake these words, but a little time, before his offering up: *John* recorded them, a little before his death, in this gospel. Our Lord uttered them, on account of that sorrow which had seized his disciples, by reason of his speedy departure, to the end that they might be comforted, have their faith strengthened, their hope encouraged. *John* wrote them, by the direction of his spirit, for the consolation of believers in all ages ^d.

I have chose these words, as being part of the doctrine Christ taught, and suitable to my design. Some of the doctrines Christ personally taught (as I propos'd unto you) have been, in past opportunities, considered, after an attempt, in several sermons, to prove Jesus of *Nazareth* the Messiah. In considering those doctrines, I have endeavour'd to trace the streams to the fountain. I have, first, consider'd the doctrines of repentance (preach'd by our Lord) and the necessity of faith in him the Messiah; following these, I was led to consider the necessity of regeneration, and of the divine power to regenerate; then I presented to your view what was the proper action, and necessary product of the new creature; our Lord teaching us that *every good tree bringeth forth good fruit* ^e. And these have led me farther to search after the root, or

^c John xiii. 23. ^d John xx. 31. ^e Matth. vii. 17.
the

the cause, that is yet more remote, and to which, I shall now attend from the words mentioned. They are part of our Lord's consolations and instructions to his disciples, but a little time, before his crucifixion and ascension: he had eaten the passover, testified he should be betrayed, yea, the traitor was gone forth, and he had told them, it was but a little while and he should return to his Father. That sorrow had seized his disciples, appears from his words, v. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled*, and further, inasmuch, as in the following verses, he not only acquaints them of things, that might afford consolation, especially when told they had a share in them; but also adds, to his other consolatory words, an assurance that he would come again, and receive them to himself. He then graciously condescends to give them some instructions, how these things should be, and also informs them, concerning the reasons of the things related, as v. 6, 12, 14, 17. Then he joins his absolute promise; *I will not leave you comfortless* (v. 18.) *I will come to you*. After which, our Lord resumes his former intimation, with some explication in their favour; as that tho' his body should be removed, *Yet a little while; and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me*, v. 19. 'Yet ye shall commune with me, by my spirit; behold me still by faith; this is certain: for' *because I live,*

live, ye shall live also. Our Lord, in these words, lays down, at once, the ground and certainty thereof, and, thereby, sweetly encourages them to bear, with a patience becoming their profession, his absence in the humane nature.

In treating of these words, I propose to consider,

First, What is meant by life, or the term live, in my text. And it may intend, that they should be raised from the dead, as he himself was to be. The doctrine of the resurrection was, in that day, much opposed; by a certain sect called *Sadduces*, *which say there is no resurrection*^f. Nevertheless, the faints, in all ages, receiv'd comfort thro' the belief of it. The apostle lays so much stress upon the doctrine of the resurrection, when writing to the *Corinthians* to establish them in this truth, that he tells them, *if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain*^g. Our Lord had before taught this doctrine concerning himself, or that he should be raised from the dead. And now he assures his disciples, that they themselves should live also. When he was about to give *John* the revelation, he made of himself, he reminds him of the truth of this doctrine, and shows him his present state of exaltation,

^f Matth. xxii. 23.

^g 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14.

saying, *Rev. i. 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell, and of death.*

Or, our Lord might, by the words under consideration, design to assure them, that the work of grace on their souls, their new life, the life of faith, should continue, tho' his bodily presence was not with them. And, as he was life it self, the author, the origin of spiritual and eternal life, he could easily make this declaration, or promise; that he is the author thereof, he hath comfortably declared in that emphatical expression, *John xiv. 6. the life*, and strongly asserted that the same life is in him as is in the Father. *John v. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* From hence our Lord may be well understood, by his words in the text, to assure them, that as he lived, who was the author of their spiritual, and the author of eternal life; so certainly their graces should be kept alive; they should be quicken'd, supported, and preserved under all afflictions and temptations, to the enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, according to his declaration, *John x. 28. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* But let not me, by this latter view, be understood to exclude the former.

Secondly,

Secondly, Who shall thus live? Why those, his disciples, that believed in him, whose hearts were troubled at the apprehension of his departure; and not those only, but all that do now, or shall hereafter, believe on him.

John vi. 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

‘He hath the seed, the beginning, the first fruits, in possession, which assure the future harvest, the full enjoyment of it hereafter’.

John xi. 26. Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. All his sheep shall thus live, those that the Father hath given to him.

John vi. 37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; v. 39. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Thirdly, The reason hereof is in these words, *because I live*; which gives us occasion to enquire, how Christ’s living is a ground, reason, or evidence of the believer’s living, as hath been explain’d under the first thing consider’d.

To which enquiry it might be answer’d many ways, 1. They were given to him to keep, and he will discharge the trust.

2. He has undertook, for them, to bring them safe to glory; he is their surety, and if he lives, they cannot miscarry.

3. He is united to them: they are members of his mystical body. And this Union

I have in view, as taught in these words, under consideration, and explain'd in the next chapter.

By Union, is generally understood an oneness or sameness, as an unison in musick; or such cleaving, adhering, or joining together, two or more persons or things, that they may be called one in some good sense. So the apostle speaks of Christ and his members, *Rom. xii. 4, 5.* *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

In further attending to this Union, and having regard to my text, I shall attempt the four following things.

I. To set before you the nature of this Union, which is between Christ, and his Members.

II. Enquire concerning the commencement of this Union.

III. As becomes the importance and difficulties attending the subject, consider the mode, *i. e.* what is, or what is meant by the band, mean, or cement of this Union.

IV. Con-

IV. Consider the effects, or how the saints support in spiritual life, and the enjoyment of future happiness are consequent upon this Union.

I. The nature of the Union that is between Christ and his members.

1st, 'Tis not an imaginary only, or meerly conceptive Union, such as is between the understanding and the thing conceiv'd; but 'tis a real Union, such as is between the vine and branches. *John xv. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches.* Every believer hath a being in Christ analogous to the branch in the vine.

2^{dly}, 'Tis a Union of the whole person, both soul and body are united to Christ. 'Tis on this Union the apostle grounds that vehement dehoration. *1 Cor. vi. 15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.* The apostle does not view the sin of fornication only; but also the exceeding aggravation of it, thro' the abuse of the body which had been so highly honoured, as to be united to Christ, to be a member of his mystical body, or at least reputed to be so. Thus, 'tis evident, the inferior part is united, and there's no doubt of the superior part being as much and as closely united:

united: Yea is assuredly so, as join'd to the inferior. Tho', I think, 'twill appear hereafter, that the soul is the medium of the body's union.

3dly, This Union is firm, solid, lasting; yea is everlasting, or admits of no dissolution. The author of it varies not from his purpose. *Mal. iii. 6. I am the Lord, I change not.* Tho' we, who have obtain'd hope thro' grace, alter in our frames, in our behaviour, in our apprehensions of the privilege, or of our interest therein; yet he remains ever the same; *Hos. ii. 19, 20. I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* In these words God assures his people of what he would put in execution; (*viz.*) a scheme laid with wisdom and equity: and also that his faithfulness should appear in the execution, and continuance of what he had given them to expect; and that their experience should discover his verity, goodness, and unchangeableness. Remember 'tis the character of Jesus, *Heb. xiii. 8. the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* He is not like us, ever fluctuating, ever changing; were his love, his purpose, his resolution, and his engagements, like ours; we might justly

expect, that we should for ever perish; especially when we consider our own unworthiness, and add thereunto our disingenious carriage: but it has been declared of him, and may thro' all ages, *John* xiii. 1. that *having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* And, where souls are brought into the closest intimacy and communion with him, we may easily conclude, 'twill be as lasting as his love that first engaged him hereunto; and that is thro' all futurity. This Union continues thro' life to death, and while the body sleeps in the grave; as we may gather from our Lord's words, (*Matth.* xxii. 31, 32.) *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not God of the dead, but of the living.* Which words intimate not only that the soul did exist, and should certainly be reunited; but also that soul and body are, even after death, reputed one person: otherwise the existence of the soul in life would have been no proof of the resurrection; nor could it easily have been accounted for, how God was not the *God of the dead, but of the living.* Now, if the soul and body, when separate, be esteem'd one person, and that one person is united to Christ; then Union

continues thro' all time, in the same sense, as God is said to be the God of the living; and not of the dead.

4thly, 'Tis a spiritual and mystical Union. 'Tis term'd spiritual in opposition, or contradistinction to all other unions in nature whatsoever (*i. e.* in the common acceptation of the term nature) and as all things relating to salvation are: mystical, as what revelation only teaches. So the apostle tells the *Ephesians*, c. iii. 4--6. *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now reveal'd unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit; which mystery, in the following words, he informs us, is this, That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, (viz. the mystical body of Christ,) and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel.* 'Tis, indeed, a great mystery in it self, as the creature is admitted to such nearness, that the condescension of Christ, and love of God, can never be sufficiently admired, or expressed; that we, who are inferior to *Angels*, and debased by sin, should, as the apostle intimates, *Eph. iv. 15, 16. grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly join'd together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,*

maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love. We may look upon it, and wonder, and justly admire; and while wondring and admiring, adore; and, as St. *John*, 1 ep. iii. 1. say, with holy rapture, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:* and sensible of our own unworthiness, ascribe all to God in the *Psalmist's* words, *Psalms cxviii. 23. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.* 'Tis such a privilege, honour, and dignity, conferred upon the subjects, as could never have enter'd into the heart of man to conceive; had not the same goodness, that devised it, reveal'd it in his word, by his spirit.

Further, as Christ and the saints make but one body. 1 *Cor. xii. 12. As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.* And as the *Modus* of this Union between Christ and his members cannot be fully comprehended; but will, after all our searches, still continue a mystery; and in many things but darkly understood: As the apostle tells us, *Eph. v. 30, 32. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

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Let us, therefore, beware least we put more or less, into this Union, than the scripture does. This Union is not made by compounding, as water is mixed with wine; nor by transmutation, as of water into wine. We are not hereby made, or exalted to be, either christs or gods; neither christized or deified, if I may be allowed the phrases. Some seem to have expressed themselves too unwarily on this head.

Neither are we so united to Christ as to become one person; tho' Christ and his church make one mystical body. Man and wife, so united as to be term'd one flesh, are still distinct persons. Nor are we so united, that we are but one natural body; for his is in heaven, and ours are on earth; and will so remain till the last judgment. *Peter* speaking of Christ, *Acts* iii. 21. says, *whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things*, evidently pointing to the last day. To which also the apostle *Paul* has respect; when speaking of the saints expectation of Christ, and the advantage that will accrue by his appearance: He expressly saith, *Phil.* iii. 21. speaking of Christ, *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, and accounts for the difficulty of performance, as well as heightens our sentiments of the favour; by adding, *according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto him-*

himself. And even at this season, mentioned by the apostle, their bodies remain distinct; for 'twill be part of their happiness and glory to contemplate the Godhead united to humanity, and to see that individual part, Christ's humanity, so highly raised, and thereby the Nature amazingly exalted.

Tho' we must not put more into this Union than scripture has in it, and therefore not these forementioned things; yet we must be equally cautious not, to put less, to diminish therefrom. This Union has more in it than taking our nature abstractedly consider'd, as mentioned, *Heb. ii. 14.* *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same:* for, in this abstracted consideration, there is as much Union between him and all the individuals of human nature, in a collective sense, as between him and some selected persons; whereas, this Union, referred to, is always mentioned as a special or peculiar privilege. There is more in this Union, between Christ and the soul, than that Union of affection, which is between them who mutually love one another; tho' it be a *David* and *Jonathan*^h: Or than there is in that Union, which is among his members; even when said to be *knit together in love*ⁱ. Jesus wept over *Jerusalem*^k, could

^h 1 Sam. xviii. 1.

ⁱ Col. ii. 2.

^k Luke xix. 4.

sympathize with the weeping sisters^l, loved a moralist^m, yet these may be short of this Union: final destruction overtook the city of *Jerusalem*, and without breach of charity, the souls of many of its inhabitants; and the young man in the gospel, we have no intimation that ascertains his future happiness; but there are many clear passages, that prove the certain happiness of the soul united to Christ.

I cannot but suppose you now ready to enquire, what is this Union? I answer, thus, the evincing to our reason, the Union of the sacred three in one divine essence, or of the two natures in Christ, or of Christ and his body, the church; is above my capacity. They are three mysterious depths beyond the reach of our reason, who can't explain the Union of soul and body; nor even that of the particles of matter. Who can declare what is the Nexus of either? However, we may say, this Union between Christ and the souls of believers, is that mystical relation, whereby, being united to Christ, they receive a right to all those blessings laid up in him, for such; even eternal lifeⁿ, which is in him. For they have freedom from condemnation^o, and he is made to them of God *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*^p. And this leads me now,

^l John xi. 35.

^m Mark x. 21.

ⁿ 1 John v. 12.

^o Rom. viii. 1.

^p 1 Cor. i. 30.

II. To enquire, as propos'd, concerning the commencement of this Union. As I have spoken of Union between Christ and believers, I might here, in some measure, be easily excus'd taking in the controversial part, the time when it began to exist: All allowing that believers are united to Christ, and our Lord, in my text, addresses himself to such: but fearing this should be, by you, esteem'd a touching too slightly on a point, by some thought of great importance; I shall observe there was some kind of Union existing before time, tho' what I principally have in view took rise in time; as I apprehend.

1st, There was, what is term'd *Election-union*, before time: or before the creation of the world. Christ being, in the purpose of God, view'd as the head, and his people as members, making one mystical body. *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.* Tho', I think, the idea in the text is complex; and not only views them, as chose to salvation, but also the order of their salvation; in which Christ is set up as the head and representative. The moving cause of choice was the display of divine favour, the glory of his grace, *Eph. i. 11, 12. being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of*
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of his own Will; that we should be to the praise of his glory. V. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace.* The act was of, or from sovereign pleasure; it may be said of this act, as of creation, Rev. iv. 11. *for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Yet this choice of them to salvation, abstractedly considered, is no more than fixedly determining them to the end; and, as the headship of Christ was appointed the means, they are said to be chosen in him; or, in this view of relation to him, God chose all that did heretofore, do now, or shall hereafter, believe in Christ; and fore-ordain'd Christ the head. So, Eph. i. 22. 'tis said, --- *and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* and, Prov. viii. 23. Christ, under the character of wisdom, says, *I was set up from everlasting.* Thus, God's purpose, or decree, included Christ and them, bound all up together, in one common bond, as many things in one bundle, displaying divine favour; hence the phrase *bound up in the bundle of life*, which is correspondent to, Luke x. 20. *your names are written in heaven.* This Union appears to me, no more than the order of election.

2dly, There was from eternity a Representative-Union: some speak of a legal, fœderal, and natural Union; but, I think, this includes them all; as 'tis in consequence of the divine decree, and there being the same

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will in each person in the divine essence. In this Representative-Union, Christ, as acting for all those chosen ones, is considered as their appointed head; their covenanting head; their surety; he that undertook to manage their cause for them; that became their surety, and engaged to stand in their stead; so as what he should do in their behalf, should be placed to their account, as much, as if personally done by them. He drew near to God, struck hands in covenant engaged for them. Hence the foundation for the imputation of our sins to him, and of his righteousness to us. And this appears to be more than the purpose of God, in the bare act of election, or fore-ordination^a; for here is a secondary view, as consent, compact, and obligation to perform the several things, agreed in covenant, relating to the redemption of the elect, and their salvation: to which appointment, and covenant, our Lord appears to allude, *John x. 15--18. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep: and other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self: I have power*

^a 1 Peter i. 20.

to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father. Yet this Representative-Union was no more than covenant relation, or covenanting on our behalf; and was an infinite favour.

3dly, There is a positive and actual Union of Christ, and every believer, of another nature, which takes its rise in time: 'tis, indeed, the effect of the preceding; but as the former consist in decree and suretiship, &c. this consists in the closest adherence and communication. And, as all spiritual life in the believer is derived from it, may, on that account, properly be stiled vital Union. 'Tis different from the first we mentioned, as that is no more than intention, design, or decree; as many materials may be selected and design'd for a building, and, yet, have no other Union than the purpose of him who chose them. 'Tis different from the second, as the compact, or scheme agreed upon in the covenant, settles the order and means, and secures the event; but the one must be observed, and the other used, before this Union is effected; or the materials selected, are actually laid together in the building, and so properly united with the foundation, and the several parts. Thus the apostle tells the believing *Ephesians*,
 † *that they are built upon the foundation of*

† Eph. ii. 20, 21.

the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. Which words fully prove the then present state of the believing *Ephesians*; and sufficiently intimate their being select materials. For as they are said to be built, so they are said also to be fitly framed; which term may not only signify the order, as to place in the building; but also a previous designation, a preparation, a bringing to the building, and suitably joining all things in it. The Agency in this building, is that of the Spirit; and the immediate effect of it, seems to be the inhabitation of God, thro' the Spirit. As this Union is of a different nature, from either of the forementioned ones, 'twill evidence that 'tis neither of the former; and if it be neither of the former: let us see if its beginning is not in time; and then further enquire, if in time, at what time it commences. And,

That this Union hath its beginning, or commences in time, seems evident from these, and such like passages of scripture; *° if the root be holy, so are the branches*; which truth, as far as it respects inwrought sanctification, is explain'd under the metaphor of grafting, in the following words;---
† and thou being a wild olive tree, wer't

° Rom. xi. 16,

† Ver. 17.

grafted

grafted in---and---partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree; for if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive-tree ".---So, after the apoſtle *Paul* had, in his cloſe to the epiſtle to the *Romans*, willed them to greet many, he adds, *chap. xvi. 7. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apoſtles, who alſo were in Chriſt before me.* This paſſage may poſſibly reſpect their profeſſion of Chriſt; but then, I ſuppoſe, it was in conſequence of the new birth, or Chriſt reveal'd in the ſoul; we know *Saul* had no ſooner paſſed under this great change, but he own'd Chriſt, and joined himſelf to the diſciples. And we know alſo, that, by being in Chriſt, he intends a new creature; at leaſt, here, one profeſſedly ſo; as is evident from *2 Cor. v. 17.* where he affirms, from effects experienced, that *if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.* This, becoming a new creature, is an effect in time, a change in ſtate, and is neceſſarily connected with a being in Chriſt, by poſitive and actual Union: then, from that living root, proceeds nourishment for the branches; then, both root and branch, are holy. Till this vital, perſonal Union takes place, it may juſtly be affirm'd, of the choſen of the Lord, as of others, that

Ver. 24.

they

they are ^w *dead in trespasses and sins*, and that they are *by nature the children of wrath, even as others, without Christ*, a far off, *i. e.* before they are quickened, made new creatures. So the apostle, when writing to the *Ephesians*, of their past state, mentions it thus, ^x *at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ---ye who sometimes were far off.* Yet these very persons, here mentioned, were in the purpose of election, in the covenant of grace ^y: and were in their then present estate, actually, personally united to Christ: wherefore, when he expresses their present state, the phrase is changed, and their state represented as the reverse of the former. ^z *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* And again, *now therefore*, *i. e.* ^a when made new creatures, personally united to Christ, ^b *ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together for an habitation*

^w Eph. ii. 1, 3. ^x Ver. 12, 13. ^y Eph. i. 3--5.
^z Eph. ii. 13. ^a Ver. 10. ^b Ver. 19. *lt.*

of God thro' the spirit. And the same apostle elsewhere saith, *There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* These scriptures, thus attended to, I think, sufficiently prove, that this positive, actual Union commences in time; and, further, that this Union contains in it an idea different and distinct, both from the purpose of God, and the covenant transaction of which we have treated before; tho' it is secured as an event certain, thro', and dependant on them.

I apprehend, this Union, of which I now treat, is, what is generally understood by the phrase united to Christ. The texts of scripture recited, concerning the *Romans* and *Ephesians*, mention a point of time, in which both *Romans* and *Ephesians* were distant, far off, without Christ; either of which terms convey an idea directly the reverse to that of Union. It does not appear to me, to be agreeable to the design of the author to suppose, these passages only intend, that the partition, between *Jew* and *Gentile*, was now broken down; and that thereby, the *Gentiles* enjoyed in common with the *Jews*, the great blessing of having the gospel preached, the way of life made known unto them: or, that, as the body of the *Jews* refused, or rejected the gospel, this grafting, bringing nigh, &c. intends no more than the preaching

of the gospel to the *Gentiles*, or their being instated in privileges like what the *Jews* had heretofore been, to whom the lively oracles of truth were committed; so to conceive, appears too general and remote: for I do not apprehend the apostle to address them as national bodies; but as churches, and individuals. Agreeable to this sentiment, is the apostle's address, ^d *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* Upon the whole of the view we have taken, this Union positive and actual, seems necessarily to begin to exist in time.

At what time, will be more particularly discussed, under the next head of this mysterious point of doctrine. Whilst I conclude the present with the following uses.

1st, To such, that have no evidence, or but doubtful evidence, of this latter Union, yet are desirous to experience it, let me apply these words of the prophet *Isaiah*, ^e *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* If this be the duty of every one, that makes mention of the name of Lord, in prayer, as his Lord; how much is it the duty of every soul, that enquires after happiness, that visits the throne of grace, thus to

^d Rom. xii. 1.

^e *Isaiah* lxii. 6, 7.

solicit that he may enjoy full evidence of *his* Union, and that God would cause his soul to praise him on *the earth*. How exceeding anxious are we many times, about an evidence of right; or about the possession of things much inferior to the advantages arising from this Union. Interest and self-preservation direct you to attend to the wise man's words, express'd on a different occasion; and which are very applicable to your present circumstance, *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids^f*: Attend to all the appointed means; especially earnest, constant prayer.

2dly, As there can no glory arise to the creature, from this Union being effected, except relative, or confer'd; God being the adviser and agent, let those, who are in the fruition of it, give God the glory. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture^g*.

III. I come now to the third thing proposed, *viz.* as becomes the importance of the subject, and the difficulties attending it, to consider what is, the mean, bond or cement of this real, vital, personal Union; or what is meant by the terms.

As neither of these terms are in this case scriptural, I shall not take upon me the

^f Prov. vi. 4.

^g Psal. c. 3.

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defence of them; but, under these terms, give you the sense of divines, and afterwards my own sense, concerning the point in hand; and then, by just deduction shew, as the case will admit, the time, when this Union commences.

1st, The sense of Divines. The most generally received sentiment is, That the bond of Union is the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on ours. This, indeed, has been opposed: But, if the several Scriptures produced, as a foundation for this sentiment are considered, we shall find, that neither the authors of this sentiment did, nor the maintainers thereof do, thus conclude, from any trivial and mean reason: but from the Spirit's being the agent in uniting, and his inhabitation in those united; and from faith's being that whereby we receive Christ, lay hold on him, have our affections raised towards him, and set upon him. The scriptures they use are the following, and others like them, 1 Cor. xii. 11, 13. *But all these (gifts and graces before-mentioned) worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; And have been all made to drink*

drink into one Spirit. But, to the point in hand, this passage proves no more than the agency of the Spirit, and the distributions thereof; together with the Union of believers one with another. They also cite 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit; i. e. partakes of the same Spirit: And Rom. viii. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit which dwelleth in you.* This text, to the agency of the Spirit, adds his inhabitation. So 1 John iii. 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Chap. iv. 13. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* Let these texts suffice, as being the chief produced to prove that the band of Union is the Spirit on Christ's part: And let us proceed to some brought to prove 'tis faith on ours; of which number are these that immediately follow, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Cant. iii. 4. I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me: And the fore-cited 1 Cor. vi. 17.* Now, tho' these passages fully prove

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the Union to be, between Christ and such souls; and strongly suggest the Spirit is the agent; yet, we must confess, they are not demonstrative proof, that the Spirit is the bond on Christ's part: But, let me say, as 'tis no where in scripture expressed what the bond is, such conclusion or expression is, in no wise contemptible; nor attended with dangerous consequences: If any part of this Union is to be attributed to the believer, as surely there is, when 'tis considered as a conjugal relation, then faith is the bond on his part; by it we apprehend Christ, devote our selves to him, avouch the Lord to be our God, *to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments; and to hearken to his voice*^b. And the apostle, viewing the Union as conjugal, faith, *Eph. v. 30—32. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.* 'Tis the excellency and suitableness of Christ, apprehended by faith, of the operation of the Spirit of God, that begets love, raises our affections; and disposes us to choose, and surrender our selves to Christ by an acceptance of him, as exhibited in the gospel; even as our Prophet, Priest, and King: and also by a fidu-

^b Deut. xxvi. 17.

cial trust, relying on him as the Lord our righteousness and strength, purposing to be for him and not for another; or as the apostle, to be espoused *to one husband,—as a chaste virgin to Christ*¹. By this faith as we have purposed to embrace him; yea, have actually embraced him; so, we also resolve to retain him, as the spouse, *Cant. iii. 4. I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, into the chamber of her that conceived me.* Thus, according to the common maxim, *Consent makes matrimony*: and this is usually, I conceive, from an apprehension of suitability and advantage; together with a belief that the issue will be accordingly.

And, this sentiment, thus consider'd, leads me to another, *viz.* that a mutual, reciprocal, hearty love between Christ and believers, is the bond of Union; or a mutual obligation, between Christ and believers to love one another. 'Tis true, when united, their love is reciprocal; and the more of Jesus's love is diffused on the soul, the greater are the effusions of the soul's love towards him. Again, the everlasting love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is conceived to be the bond of the elect's Union to the sacred Three. Which sentiment, if it be understood, as considering God to be love, and the author

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

and

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and finisher of all things, may be according
to truth; but if love be considered, as that
which distinguishes its objects by providing
favours for them, I apprehend, 'tis rather
the cause, of which the bond is the effect:
Or, the Union is an effect of love the cause,
i. e. divine, everlasting love pitching upon
those happy objects as its objects. Everlast-
ing love, surely, is the cause original of this
union under present consideration. Union,
among intelligents, always seems to note a-
greement; and love, if it be its bond, must
be reciprocal; for 'tis very possible, I may
set my love upon one who has none for me,
and my affections may cleave to the person;
yet, there is not that joining or cement,
without it be reciprocal, that the term U-
nion, applied to intelligents, usually implies:
Nor do I conceive any other than what is
proper to faith, which apprehends, and em-
braces its objects. 'Tis true, divine love can
beget love: but then, this is effected in time.
The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,
by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us^k.
He causes souls to see, to taste, to feel the
love of God; he discovers to them the eter-
nal purpose; apprizes them personally of
the blessings that are designed for them;
and applies the benefits of Christ to them:
and thereby, the divine love is manifested
towards us, even, *that God sent his only be-*

^k Rom. v. 5.

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*gotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him.*¹ *Herein is love; love manifested, not that we loved God, prior or antecedent to this, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*^m. The effect of which application or discovery of the divine love is, *that we love him; because he first loved us*ⁿ, in the eternal purpose, in sending Jesus, in discovering our interest in him, and in applying the benefits that flow thro' him; thereby enabling and engaging our souls to love him.

Having, thus briefly, laid before you various opinions touching the subject under consideration; and made some few remarks as I pass'd along; it follows, as I propos'd,

2dly, To lay before you my own sentiment, or offer some thoughts upon this subject: And, in doing of it, as I have already hinted, I shall not go about to defend the propriety, of the terms; bond, cement, or mean, as applicable to the present subject: nor shall I think my self blameable, if what I offer does not come up to the idea strictly, of either of the recited terms. For, if we can't prove there is a mean, &c. I cannot justly be blamed for not discovering what it is: but I do not herein determine. Give me leave to suggest the following queries, and then to reason upon them,

¹ 1 John iv. 9.

^m Ver. 10.

ⁿ Ver. 19.

applying

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applying the whole to the matter in hand.
The first query shall be this.

Query I. Whether the Union band, is not the power of God, which unites all the different parts of the creation together, or causes them to hold or remain together, in the appointed order: which fact the *Psalmist* proves: *Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances*°. How, or by what laws the several orbs perform their motions, keep their due distances; or the several particles of matter cohere together, is yet unknown, otherwise, than that 'tis by the power and wisdom of God. We know what is the Nexus, 'twixt some parts of matter differently modified; but what is the Nexus, bond or fastening 'twixt one particle of a matter, and another of the same modification we know not; *e. g.* The different particles in a stone, if separated; we know not how to join together again as before, nor what it was that held them in such close tact: This only the wisdom and power of God doth. And as we know not how this Union is effected, in the examples; so, neither can we know, how the Union between Christ and the believer is, or subsists, certainly; otherwise than by the light of revelation. And, as both the creation it self, and the order in which it sub-

° Psalm cxix. 90, 91.

sists, is attributed to the agency of the Spirit, *Psal. civ. 30. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created : and thou renewest the face of the earth.* Job xxvi. 13. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens : So also, the work begun, and carried on in the soul of the believer, is attributed to the Spirit and power of God : whence he is said, by some, to be the bond of Union on Christ's part, as has been attended unto before : but a suggestion, that 'tis the power of God which answers to the band, &c. however just, it may appear, and full, as the ultimate *ratio* ; yet it will remain, in a great measure, obscure, unless we can arrive at some nearer operation, and effect of this power. Wherefore, as a second step is necessary ; therefore, I would enquire,

Query II. Whether the divine principle imparted (if that may be called a mean, &c.) is not the matter sought ; which, as it is an effect of the operation of divine power ; so, also, it has the Lord Jesus for the root of it ; and this grows and flourishes under the divine culture, being, in scripture phrase, the *good tree*^p, or branch, and brings forth fruit abundantly, agreeable to the Metaphor, *John xv. 1 and 5. I am the true vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing.* And here-

^p Matth. vii. 17.

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in, our Lord Jesus is eminently, *the author and finisher of our faith*^a. He is the fountain, whence all living streams flow! he is the root from whence vital sap arises; and both spirit, life, and nourishment, are propagated.

Further, this spiritual life, this divine principle, seems proper to unite Christ, and the soul; has its rise in him, and is infused into the person becoming a true christian. *For, we are his (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works*^r. Possibly, Gen. ii. 21, 22. containing the account of the formation of woman, from the rib of Adam, might be typical of the formation of the spouse of Christ and every saved one; and then, both Adam's deduction, concerning her, ver. 23. *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man*; and the apostle's deduction, concerning the spouse of Christ, are equally just, and on the same foundation. The words of the apostle are these, *we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*^s; which is a manifest allusion to that in *Genesis*. Now, if we drop the letter of the text, as far as it may respect our having the same humane nature, it remains that our spiritual nature is derived from Christ, in like manner as Eve's body was from Adam, that is, by the power of

^a Heb. xii. 2.

^r Eph. ii. 10.

^s Eph. v. 30.

God: and, for these reasons, we should cleave unto him. Christ is the believer's root, and, as such, he is the believer's life: their spiritual life is hid with him^t. Now, the root communicates all nourishment by the sap; so, in grafting, 'tis a communication of sap from the root that nourishes. The wild olive branches, broken off the wild stock, first, on their ingrafting into the good, receive infusion of sap; and then produce good fruit; and, by constant communication, they are upheld and supported.

This spiritual life, infused into the soul, hath many things; given to excite it to action, to support its vigour, and to cause it to grow and flourish; and, also, to refresh and solace it. And this grace, which is given to the head, without measure; in whom *all fullness dwells*^u; is given to his members, in measure; thro' the operation of the Spirit. Were it possible, that the principle of spiritual life in us, could be extinguished; or, that the communication between Christ and us, could be entirely cut off; all spiritual actions would as instantly cease, as natural ones do, in an animal body, whose head is separated from it, or a supply of spirits utterly impeded; or a withering would ensue, like unto what we see, in a branch, broken from a tree, having no supply of juice.

^t Col. iii. 3, 4. ^u Col. i. 19.

Which

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Which reasoning may be confirm'd by our Lord's words, *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine • no more can ye, except ye abide in me,--- for, without me ye can do nothing*^w. Should this be the case, both these enquiries might be join'd in substance; and the account would be thus, that in this Union, the power of God is exerted; in forming, implanting, and upholding, or continuing the divine principle, as a Nexus, or mean of Union betwixt Christ and the believer: and this power always maintains the Union, when once made^x. But here may arise an objection, which is as follows.

Obj. If Christ be the root, and this Union such as represented, such immediate communication seems necessarily to follow, that there don't need those supplies, aids, &c. which the scripture so frequently mentions, as what the christian stands in need of, in order to his growth in grace, or bearing fruit unto holiness; consequently, such manner of accounting for Union, or the mean thereof, cannot be right.

Ans. To this I would reply thus; Will not the same objection lie against either of the methods mentioned to account for Union, or even Union it self? Who can account for the ways of God, the methods that divine wisdom has describ'd, and made

^w John xv. 4, 5.

^x 1 Pet. i. 5.

necessary

necessary to such ends or purposes? If this be the way, and this the truth, a few difficulties will not overthrow it. The same objection might be raised against food, or rest, being necessary, to the support of the humane nature of Christ before his crucifixion, it being united to the divine; yet we have abundant reason to conclude, they both were, from his hungering, thirsting, sleeping, and at last dying; which is not easy to comprehend, *viz.* how that united to life, that united to the essence, the original of all life, could die: yet so it was; we are in possession of the fact. Should we have recourse to that, from whence the metaphor is taken, the analogical reasoning drawn, and try the force of the objection there, we shall find it deficient in weight or force. If we say, a branch having Union with a stock, consequently, communion of sap, needs no more in order to nourishment, growth, produce of proper fruit in kind and quantity: experience immediately shews us our error, and informs us that wind, rain, and sun, have been, and still are, necessary for such ends. And so, the christian finds, that all the means God hath appointed, in order for growth of grace, or his bearing fruit unto holiness, are necessary as such. Again,

The principle of life imparted, seems to answer the term bond of Union, or band of Union, between Christ and the believer;
and

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 and 'tis by this increasing, the soul is more
 conform'd to Jesus, whilst here. As the
 apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all, with open*
face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of
the Lord, are changed into the same image,
from glory to glory, even, as by the Spirit of
the Lord. And, the greatest increase, growth,
 or flourishing of this principle, is the great-
 est likeness to Jesus. And, if 'twould
 admit of comparison, in an agreeable simile,
 it denotes the strongest Union with him;
 for, by it, as a branch, the largest in a tree,
 is torn from thence, with the greatest diffi-
 culty; as being more strongly united, not by
 having more parts in tact, only larger; like
 as we see in wood; the grain of the young
 and small wood is small: but, to dismiss
 the metaphor and proceed; tho' there be
 a growing in grace, and in spiritual stature;
 as from babes to young men, and to strong
 men, and to fathers in Christ Jesus^y; yet
 the Union of one, is as firm as that of the
 other. For eternal love was the cause of it;
 almighty power effected it; and divine
 faithfulness, at all times, engages the exer-
 tion of the same power, in its preservation.
 So that here, we may justly apply our Lord's
 comfortable words; *My sheep hear my voice,*
and I know them, and they follow me. And,
I give unto them eternal life; and they shall

^y 1 John ii. 12, 13. 1 Cor. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

^z John x. 27, 28.

never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Further, the divine principle imparted, seems to answer the terms; mean, cement, and the term bond, when said to be on Christ's part; and on ours. That is with *proviso* the latter term may convey the idea design'd by the phrase, *The bond of Union is the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on ours.* It seems to answer to those terms thus, as the divine principle imparted, is an exertion of the divine power, discriminately for the good of the subject: Not an exertion of it indifferently, for the good of all, as his upholding all things; in which all his creatures are said to be in him, and in some sense, united to him; *For, in him we live, and move, and have our being.---For we, also, are his offspring*^a. This imparting the divine principle, is not an exertion of divine power thus indifferently; but is an exertion of it discriminately, apprehending the subject; and whereby the subject is reciprocally disposed to apprehend God in Christ, Christ as his; and also to exercise the derived principle and power for his glory; even the greatest good 'tis capable of attempting, respecting God: and, as we fall short of doing any good to him immediately, our goodness not extending to him; so, it turns to him mediately, by extending kindness, in

^a Acts xvii. 28.

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a peculiar manner to the saints, the excellent in the earth ^b. As blood runs thro' the whole of the natural body, thereby nourishing, &c. and is also part of it; flows from, and returns to the heart, in its circulation: so grace flows from Christ out of his fulness; runs through each of the mystical members of his body, and returns to him. Blood is called the life of the creature; and could it be separated from the body, life would cease. Could the communion, between Christ and a believer, intirely cease, he would undergo a spiritual death; as is evident from that spiritual lethargy, which is often seen, when there is much suspension ^c; and which lethargick frame is only removed by a fresh supply of spiritual life, a fresh operation of divine power. I should now proceed to the deductions, from these things laid before you, concerning the time; but I see a second objection present it self.

Object. II. As this Union, is prior to any act of faith; how can it comport with that scripture, *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him* ^d?

Ans^w. These words objected, I apprehend, do not necessarily lead us to conclude, that he that doth not act faith on the Redeemer, in the present moment, never shall;

^b Acts iv. 32. Psal. xvi. 3.

^c Psal. cxix. 25.

^d John iii. 36.

though

though they intimate, that the subject capable of faith, without both it, and its act, shall not see life. However, this we are assured of, 1 *John* v. 12. *He that hath the Son, hath life.* And *Rom.* viii. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:* The latter end of the verse is explanative of the former; and also descriptive of what is proper to such persons, or the evidence of such a state. And, I add, tho' this Union, by the imparting of the divine principle, is prior to any act of faith, yet 'tis instantaneous; and is, sometimes, visibly perceiv'd to be succeeded immediately by an act of faith; as in the case of *Lydia*, and the jaylor: but faith, and the act of it, may be also, tho' so far unobserved, as not to be determinate to the happy subject, whether it did act faith or no, at that season; yet, says the person, I hope I begun then to love Christ. Therefore, the text objected may be consider'd, if proving any thing in the present case, as only proving, that as soon as the divine seed is implanted, 'tis, under the influence of the Spirit, deduced into act: wherever there is life, there is motion; tho' it may be weak, or little more than breathing. As *Lazarus*; when the life-giving word was gone forth, having receiv'd it, comes out of the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave cloaths, and his face covered with a napkin: doubtless his motion to-

42 *What is, or what is meant by Terms, &c.*

wards our Lord, by reason of the impediments, might be in some measure irregular, yet he moves, and moves towards Christ, in obedience; so doth the soul, having the divine principle implanted. Thus, also, as the *Shunamite's* son discover'd life, by the warmth of the flesh; needling; and opening of the eyes: so does this divine principle discover itself at certain opportunities evidently; in some more evident, and suddenly, than in others; but, we are assured, 'tis a living principle, an active principle. And,

As it is observ'd of the natural living birth, that it usually enters the world crying, an evident sign of life; not sleeping, which hath a semblance of death: so, also, that the new birth, or the implantation of the divine principle is attended in proper subjects, with crying, or breathing; like as we read of *Saul* the persecutor, afterwards *Paul* the preacher, when Jesus had discovered himself to him, he cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and when his new birth was to be evidenced to men, 'tis said, *Behold he prayeth*^e. Let these things suffice, with regard to what is the mean, &c. And then,

3dly, As has been propos'd, I shall now attempt, by just deduction, to shew the point of time when this vital Union, in

^e Acts ix. 6.

^f Ver. 11.

confe-

Deductions concerning the point of Time. 43

consequence of what has been term'd *Election*, and *Representative-Union*, commences. I have before attempted to prove, that it had its rise in time: how far the arguments were determinate, you are judges for yourselves. And, as we have view'd various sentiments, let us now attend to what may fairly be deduced from them, towards settling the point under present consideration. And, then,

The point of time, if this Union was effected by the Spirit, and he be the bond on Christ's part, was, when first the great and lasting change was wrought by his operation; when he pitched in them as a tent; and took up his residence in the soul, as in an habitation or temple: And the first act of faith, was the first demonstration of this change; and of the soul's uniting, cleaving to, and embracing Jesus, in consequence of that operation, of almighty power, which has been before mentioned.

Again, if the bond of Union is, the mutual love of Christ and the believer, the point of time, when the Union commences, is the moment, in which reciprocal love takes place.

Further, if it be the power of God, as was hinted, that answers to what is intended by the band of Union, then the Union commences, when the divine power is employ'd, in joining the soul to the Lord Je-

44 *Deductions concerning the point of Time.*

fus: but, if we join this power with the implantation of the divine principle, as such implantation, and the matter implanted, are the effects of it; then the period of time is that, in which the soul, thro' this mighty operation, being broken from the old stock or olive, is grafted into Jesus, the new stock, the good olive, and has instant communication with him. The period of time is in the moment of this incision, ingrafting, or derivation of spiritual life into the soul; even before 'tis deduced into action: and it cannot be prior to this, that the soul unites or engages her self, in the act of recumbency, or that she, by faith, takes possession of Christ, as hers; she first apprehends, or rather is apprehended of Christ; inclosed in him, as the graft in the stock; and then she devotes her self to, or closes with him. So the spouse recounts *Cant. ii. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.* Now,

Let me here offer two arguments, as a farther confirmation that this true, real, vital Union of persons with the Lord Jesus, is in time, and at the time of regeneration. I would not here be understood, from the *copia* of terms join'd to Union, to design that *Election-Union*, and *Representative-Union*, were not, as such, true and real Union. This vital Union, as I have shewn, that it is different from *Election* or *Representative-Union*, &c. so also, it hath a different *Epo-*
cha,

cha, or commencement. That it commences at the time of regeneration seems evident from the effect, upon which I would ground my first argument. For,

1st, As the united to Christ becomes instantly a living branch, a person spiritually alive; so is every regenerate soul; that person that is regenerated, is a new creature, is spiritually alive. It may afford us some illustration, if we compare this Union, of which we treat, with that of soul and body; the band of that, we know not; but this we know, that, as soon as the soul is united to the body, there is a principle of life; and God had no sooner breath'd the breath of life into *Adam*, but he became a living soul; and further we know, that, when the bond, between soul and body is dissolved, death, the privation of life, immediately ensues. Is this the case of the natural Union of soul and body? is a principle of life, the immediate consequence of it? And, can dead members be in Christ, a living head of influence? Are we not told, that unprofitable branches are broken off^s; those who are only in him by profession, or lift up, as the *Greek* verb rendred *take away*^h, also signifies? And can we suppose this Union actual, to be with those who are *dead in trespasses and sins*? Were we actually united, before we had actual personal being?

^s John xv. 2.

^h *Αἶμα*.

46 *Deductions concerning the point of Time.*

Does any suppose there was a Union subsisting (otherwise than in purpose or decree) of the humane nature of our Lord, that, which suffer'd without the gates of *Jerusalem*, and the second person in the glorious Trinity, prior, to his assuming flesh in the womb of the virgin *Mary*? But, leaving these enquiries, I pass to the second head of argument, to prove its commencement at the time of regeneration.

2dly, The other argument shall be the united evidence of two texts of scripture, which, as they are eternal verities, will also, as I apprehend, determine this Union of which we treat, to be a Union that commences in time, and also the time of its commencing. The first is that *Rom. viii. 9.* *Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* These words are not expressive only, of what may be any man's apprehension of himself; or, the apprehension of others concerning him; but are declarative of a matter of fact; they are a determination upon a case. The apostle had, in the first verse of the chapter, been speaking of being in Christ, and the advantage of it (*viz.*) that there was no condemnation to such, and told us the visible effect, *they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*: and *ver. 4.* he joins himself as one so walking: and in the former part of this 9th *verse*, he tells those *Romans*,
But

Deductions concerning the point of Time. 47

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you : which words are as an answer to such queries as they might start, on what he had deliver'd in the 6, 7 and 8th verses. 'Tis observable, that, in the words to which we refer, the apostle does not take so much notice of what is the purpose, or design of God ; as, of what is the difference of a regenerate, and natural person ; the one, he expressly says, is in Christ, or is Christ's ; and of the other, *he is none of his*. Now, the meaning of these words cannot be, that every one, that has not now the Spirit of Christ, is none of God's chosen, or of Christ's redeemed ones ; because many, that have not the Spirit now, will have him hereafter ; and thereby evince they were both chosen, and redeemed : as many have done, since this scripture was written. Neither can this passage intend, that he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his by profession, for many may be in Christ by profession ; yea, doubtless, then were, and now are, that have not his Spirit. But the meaning of the words, is agreeable to the former part of this, and the whole subsequent verse, *viz.* that he is no real member of Christ's mystical body, who hath not his spirit ; and, so understood, it serves to illustrate and explain the former part of the verse ; and this sense is further confirm'd by the following verse, *And if Christ be in you, the body*
is

48 *Deductions concerning the point of Time.*

is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness. I look upon the words, *Christ in them, they in Christ, and Christ's spirit being in them,* as used in the verses recited, to be equivalent terms, or of like import; and also, as fully proving the matter, for which they are brought. But,

Yet, to this passage, *Rom. viii. 9.* let me add another, that may further serve to explain this, and to prove the point under consideration; we are told by the same author, *2 Cor. 5. xvii.* *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are pass'd away, behold, all things are become new:* here the words positively affirm, that *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* Now, by being in Christ, here can't be intended, barely being in him by the Father's choice, nor by Christ's being his representative-head: Nor, can it intend, his being in Christ by profession only; for, many may be in Christ; some, in one of these ways; others, in another; and some in all, and yet are not new creatures; therefore, this must intend Union; that grafting into Christ, of which we have been treating; that is no sooner perform'd, with regard to the happy subject; but this may justly be affirm'd, that the person is a new creature: But that such a work has been perform'd, can only be manifested by the persons declaration and behaviour. From these texts 'tis plain, that
this

this vital, real, spiritual Union; and the implantation of the divine principle, or forming of the new creature, are of equal date in all their subjects.

'Tis now needful, and as I have brought what was proposed to be treated of under this head, to a close; so, also, it seems a proper time, to add some general uses, which are as follow.

Use I. From the difficulties that attend the doctrine of Union in general, and this part, concerning the band, mean, cement, in particular, let us learn not to pass judgment too hastily, nor peremptorily, concerning the sentiments of others; also not to be dogmatical concerning our own: remembering that instruction which saith, *The servant of the Lord must not strive: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient*¹; or forbearing. It does not become the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus, to strive, when designing to instruct, with noise and clamour; these things are conformable to the spirits of this world, who, in their contests, eye not the glory of God, and the good of souls, but conquest or prevalency; that they may obtain the laurel from men. On the contrary, it should be our great concern to approve our selves to God, to whom all should appeal; and before whom all must appear. *For it is written, as I live, saith*

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 24.

*the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God^k. We have no occasion to fear, if we do not call them to account, or condemn, or censure them; that they, if erring will not be accountable, for God is judge; and his eyes run to and fro in the earth. Let us, therefore, not indulge a vain humour of judging others; as tho' we were already perfect, or had attain'd to some very superior degree of knowledge; but, on the contrary, let us remember, that we are still imperfect; that we have nought but what we have receiv'd: and may we seek to obey that direction of the apostle, which saith, *Sanctify the Lord in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*^l. Such behaviour is agreeable to the divine mind; and, should we be reproach'd by any with pusillanimity, in what we judge to be the cause of truth; let our stedfast adherence to those truths we profess, and an agreeable walk, remove that occasion of stumbling out of the way.*

I would not, while leading to humbleness of mind, and a peaceable behaviour, be understood to suggest, that we are to be unactive in forming our judgments, or propa-

^k Rom. xiv. 11, 12.

^l 1 Pet. iii. 15.

gating truth. No, we should weigh, and try all doctrines and reasonings of men; yea, of the best men; and let our assent, or passing judgment, still be according to the degree of evidence, or what they will weigh in the ballance of the sanctuary, the word of God. The rule the apostle gave the *Thessalonians*^m, was this; *Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.* The prophet *Isaiah* advises thus; *To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*ⁿ. This is the only certain, infallible rule, that God has graciously condescended to leave us fallible creatures, to form our judgments by. Hither then, let us have recourse from time to time; humbly imploring divine aid, as *Elibu* instructs, *Job xxxiv. 32. That which I see not, teach thou me*; or as the *Psalmist* both prays and pleads, *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day*^o. When we can, in pursuit of the resolution of difficulties, thro' grace, thus approach God, with humble dependence, and appropriating views; we have great reason to expect the promised, and sufficient assistance; even *the Spirit of truth*, who, when he is come, will guide us into all truth, even as our Lord declared to his disciples,

^m 1 Theff. v. 21.ⁿ Isai. viii. 20.^o Psal. xxv. 5.

that he should guide them *into all truth*^p; he has now the same power, and is the same Spirit of truth. O that he would, in every difficulty, guide our way; and not suffer us to turn aside, either to the right-hand or left.

Use II. As the things we have attended, afford matter of instruction and caution; so, from thence I would say, let none dare too boldly, to assert their interest in the divine favour, or covenant-relation; till this Union is manifested, at least, in their own souls: there can be no valuable evidence of either, even to themselves, prior to this; and others can only judge by the effect or product. Herein our Lord has afforded us ample direction, and already determin'd the case, with respect to the rule of Judgment: *Do men (saith he) gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them*^q. In these words, our Lord informs us, what are the evidences to men; and that where the new creature is form'd, a divine principle implanted, or grace imparted, such fruits or

^p John xvi. 13.

^q Matth. vii. 16—20.

effects are the consequence, as will be demonstrative of it, in like manner as good fruit is of a good tree : and hereby, at the same time, our Lord destroys all hopes that might arise from a negative holiness ; or, if possible, a neutral state ; and hath assured us, we shall know false prophets by their fruits ; and also, good trees and bad, or persons renew'd, or unrenew'd. Tho' I think the task, with respect to persons, is, many times, far more difficult, than it is to distinguish between one tree and another, literally, when the fruit is upon each ; but a waiting may produce proper maturity, and make the matter more easy, with respect to persons, than it may be at the present. Agreeable hereunto are the words of the apostle *James*, in which he fixes the greatest certainty, that may be obtain'd by external evidence ; and excludes the vain and trifling boaster of faith : *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*^r : i. e. being by it self, or without proper fruits or effects. Faith is not in its nature an idle or inoperative grace ; tho' sometimes its acts may be in a great measure obstructed or suspended. And, to the former words, he immediately adds, *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works : shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works*^s. And hereby he proves abundantly,

^r Jam. ii. 17.^s Ver. 18.

dantly,

dantly, that the operation of faith, in various actings, is far better proof of its being, than a bare declaration of it; in which we have only the veracity of the declarer to depend upon. I might add hereunto, the express words of our Lord, *I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*: and, as the next clause, *without me ye can do nothing*^t, proveth, that without communication with Christ, there can be no produce of good fruit: so, the former proveth, that all who are united to Christ, really, as well as in profession, will abound in a behaviour, that is suitable thereunto; there will not only be one act or two; but, as opportunity is afforded, a variety.

Use III. Let none, on account of this doctrine, write hard things against themselves, because they do not yet experience this Union; such as these; that they are rejected of God; and, that 'tis in vain to attend the means of grace: for, who hath searched the records above? or, who can discover that concerning himself, while his heart is disposed to wait at wisdom's gate, and there remains such a gracious record? *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors*^u. Certainly, Christ left that parable as an instruction, that sovereign

^t John xv. 5.^u Prov. viii. 34.

power and rich grace can call, dispose us to go, and put us into the vineyard at the last hour; in which we are told, that the Lord of the vineyard went out about the eleventh hour, *and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye, also, into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive^w.* Tho' sovereign pleasure hath reserv'd its own prerogative, to give to whom, and how it pleases; yet it hath also been graciously pleased, to exhibit various encouragements to the soul, to seek for mercy; and, to them that seek aright, there is ground of hope that they shall obtain.

IV. I come now to the last thing proposed in the beginning, (*viz.*) to

Consider the effects: or, how the saints support in spiritual life, and enjoyment of future happiness, are consequent upon this Union, or connected with it. Which I hope to do satisfactorily, in what follows. And then,

The happy effects, or glorious consequences of this Union, are together, and severally, such, as at once declare the infinite wisdom and goodness of the contriver; together with the certain support of spiritual

^w Matth. xx. 6, 7.

life, in every united soul, whilst here; and the full enjoyment of all future happiness. What remains now to be treated of under this head, may be called the Marrow of the text: and, I hope, under the direction and influence of the Spirit, will, in the considering, be as marrow and fatness to our souls. Something of what is to follow, has been hinted already, when treating of the Nature of this Union: but, as then, I did but hint at these things, I shall now consider them more largely; and shew, how it is, that the saints support in spiritual life, and their enjoyment of future happiness, are consequent upon this Union: and these things will appear, from several effects of this Union, and some reasonings upon them, supported by the evidence of the scriptures.

In considering of the effects, &c. I purpose to follow that order, which appears to me, the most easy to conceive of them in; and which, I apprehend, to be the natural order also. And, thus, hoping for the divine assistance, I proceed to lay down, as the first effect of this Union, that,

Effect I. As they are in him, members of his mystical body; branches of him, the vine, sprouts from that root; so they are thro' him, for his sake, acquitted; justified; accepted; yea, beloved. But I shall attend to these terms a little distinctly, and in succession.

I/t,

Effect I. *Consequences of this Union.* 57

1st, They are acquitted, thro' him, for his sake, of whatever charges the law may lay unto them; or the adversary, *the accuser of the brethren*, bring against them; they are acquitted of them all: as being found united to Christ, the indictment is quash'd, and the book for ever cancell'd; and the supreme judge, the offended party, the creditor declares, *their sins and iniquities will I remember no more* *. And, if he will remember them no more, wicked mens remembring of them; Devils, the tempters to sin, remembring of them; or the remembrance of them, on an accusing conscience, will never procure damnation: hence the blessedness, the apostle recites from the *Psalmist*, is evident and full; *Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin* †. And, if this be the case, as certainly it is, of those united to Christ, in vain does sin arise; and Satan multiply charges; for God, that changeth not, hath thus pronounced; and the declaration will always be the same, as the same reason for it will ever subsist: thus their enjoyment of future happiness cannot be impeded by any charge; yea, in the day of most solemn acquittal, their sins shall be cover'd from publick view; at least, such view as is judicial, and condemnatory: wherefore, I apprehend, the *Psalmist* joins forgiveness and covering of sin

* Heb. x. 17.

† Rom. iv. 8.

together, when he saith, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered^z.* Agreeable hereunto, are these words concerning *Israel*, by the prophet *Jeremiah*; *In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for, I will pardon them whom I reserve^a.* Which text is a plain intimation, that he will not call them up in judgment; for, their not being found is the same thing, as not to bring them in by way of accusation against them; or not to enter into judgment with them, on the account of them. But yet, their acquittal is in a way of strict justice; tho' 'tis an act of wonderful mercy, and the effect of boundless love; and, therefore, they are also said to be justified: those who are in him are justified. Notwithstanding pardon is free to them, yet all the demands of the law, and those of justice are satisfied. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right^b? He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he^c.* And on this basis we proceed to the second term.

2dly, Those united to Christ are justified. For, *by him, all that believe are justified*

^z Psal. xxxii. 1.

^a Jer. l. 20.

^b Gen. xviii. 25.

^c Deut. xxxii. 4.

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from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses^d. And, in consequence of their being united to him, which is evidenced by their believing in him, the apostle declares, *there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*^e. Justification is a forensick term, and a judicial sentence; whereby persons are freed, or pronounced free, either from the charge exhibited, as not being made to appear, or from punishment sought for, and the judgment claim'd against them.

That, those that are united to Christ, were finners, great finners, yea, some of them *Jerusalem* finners, is granted; but whether they ought personally to suffer, or justice will be injured, is the matter of dispute. And infinite Love proposed, and infinite Wisdom found out a way, *that he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*^f. Our sins are call'd debts, now taking of them in this pecuniary way, those united are as under coverts not answerable; their husband must be sued. Or, if we look on them as principals in the debt, they have a surety, who is ready to pay the debt: or, as relating to those in this day, one who hath been arrested by justice, has paid down the sum required already; and, in consequence, they must be discharg'd, and honourably

^d Acts xiii. 39.

^e Rom. viii. 1.

^f Rom. iii. 26.

absolv'd from all action, or the cause of it.
But,

Viewing the matter exhibited against those united, to be of a penal nature, as sin certainly is; and therefore, the soul that sins, is under an obligation to punishment, even death it self, temporal and eternal: yet, as the gracious sovereign has admitted of a substitute to make compensation, for their sins; and, as that substitute has paid down the price of redemption; suffer'd the demerit due to their sins: which substitute, or surety, is their mystical and representative head; and, as he is justified and discharg'd; so, surely, all his members must: in cases capital, the absolving of the head, is, consequently, the absolving all the members of the body natural: and, in the case before us, while the head remains not chargeable, the members must remain uncondemn'd; and, while he is declared justly and honourably clear'd, having answered all demands, doubtless the price paid down will, at all times, be pleaded by him in bar to judgment coming on them to condemnation; as 'twas paid down on their behalf. Thus their manifold transgressions, who are united to Jesus, are not what will seclude them from the possession of future happiness.

A variety of scriptures offer themselves to confirm what has been hinted above. A few
of

Of the many passages shall be attended unto. Christ is unto those united to him, as a Husband. The apostle speaking of the Lord's nourishing the church, adds, *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*^g. And, as such, he answers for her to all charges, the law may bring against her, for condemnation: he satisfies justice to the utmost farthing. Are their sins view'd as of a penal nature? their help is laid upon one that is mighty^h; God hath exalted one chosen out of the people; one able and willing to bear, to do, and suffer all that the law, and divine justice requires for satisfaction, on their behalf; yea, once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himselfⁱ: and the author to the *Hebrews* further observes, referring to the sacrifices under the law, that *Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate*^k: Thus, making attonement for them. He suffered the demerit of their sins, when the Lord of Hosts called, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow*^l: he suffer'd, the just

^g Eph. v. 30—32. ^h Psal. lxxxix. 19. ⁱ Heb. ix. 26.
^k Heb. xiii. 12. ^l Zach. xiii. 7.

for the unjust. The prophet, regarding his passion, saith, *All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*^m; or, as it is in the margin, he hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him. And the Lord declares, by the mouth of the same prophet, that *he shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities*ⁿ, i. e. the punishment due to their sins. And, as he stood in their stead, answered the demands of the law, he was *justified in the Spirit*^o; discharged as having paid the debt; and, at once proved himself to be the Messias, God-Man and Redeemer. As Peter calls upon the men of Israel to hear, saying, *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did, by him, in the midst of you; as ye yourselves also know: Him, being deliver'd, by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and, by wicked hands, have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible he should be holden of it*^p. Considering the divine nature as united to the human, he rose by his own power; as having perform'd the

^m Isai. liii. 6.ⁿ Ver. 11.^o 1 Tim. iii. 16.^p Acts ii. 22—24.

Effect I. *Consequences of this Union.* 63

condition of the covenant, with the Father's approbation; he rose having satisfied both law and justice; as appear'd by the sentence of release, from the righteous and sovereign judge: which the apostle corroborates; saying, *who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*^a. And, as there is so near a relation betwixt him and his members, while he remains not charged, they will remain uncondemned. This seems to be holy *Paul's* triumph, *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died; that paid the debt, that suffered; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God*^r; is acquitted, and declared to have made full payment, by his sitting down on the right-hand of the majesty on high; so, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth*^s. And who will impeach his judgment? who shall cause him to reverse the sentence? Christ hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also*; and, whatever charge is brought against them, he hath the price paid down to plead in bar to condemnation; *he ever lives to make intercession for them*^t; he is our advocate at the Father's right-hand, and *the propitiation for our sins*^u; did he give his life a ransom for them? and will he not plead his suffering for them? will he not guard his mem-

^a Rom. iv. 25.

^r Rom. viii. 34.

^s Ver. 33.

^t Heb. vii. 25.

^u 1 John ii. 2.

bers,

64 *Happy Effects, or Glorious Effect I.*
bers, and say to Satan accusing them, as he
did when he accused Joshua; *The Lord re-
buke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath
chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: Is not this a
brand pluck'd out of the fire**? And

Here our Lord's words stand in full
strength, *Because I live, ye shall live also;*
if I am justified, so shall ye; if I am de-
clared to be the Son of God with power, ye
shall be declared the *blessed of my Father**.
And as the former has been declared of
Christ, who *was made of the seed of David
according to the flesh, and declared, or de-
termined, and manifested fully, to be the
Son of God, with power, according to the
Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from
the dead*†: so God having thus own'd and
evidenced Jesus to be his Son, hath, al-
so, been graciously pleased to order it, for his
sake, and for the consolation of all the mem-
bers of his mystical body, to be proclaim'd,
as with sound of trumpet, thus; *Comfort ye,
comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye
comfortably to Jerusalem; according to the He-
brew idiom, to the heart, as that was look'd
upon as the seat of joy or sorrow, and is deep-
ly affected with grief: well, speak to the af-
flicted, the mourners, saith God; to those
whose eyes are ready to fail with looking
up; tell them, or my church; cry unto her,
that her warfare is accomplished, that her*

* Zach. iii. 2.

* Matth. xxv. 34.

† Rom. i. 3, 4.

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iniquity is pardon'd^z. Is not this to be declared blessed indeed? and this, is all in and thro' Christ: since he lives who undertook the cause, was able to pay the debt, had engag'd to satisfy; and lives now, having paid, acquitted, and justified in all respects. And we are directed to look up to our reconciled God: Oh how sweet, refreshing, invigorating and soul-enlarging are those words, put into our mouths and commanded to be publish'd; *Behold your God!* how delighting are they to every member of his mystical body; especially when attended to, and when faith, humbly claiming an interest in him, has her eye fix'd upon him. These words were to be publish'd aloud, *Lift up thy voice with strength*^a: And, I apprehend, that to view him as their creator, sovereign and judge; is not the primary, or ultimate intention of the words; neither does it appear agreeable to conceive, that they are call'd upon, in this peculiar manner, to consider God absolutely; but rather, it is to behold him as their reconciled God, their friend, their God in covenant; yea, he who is *God our Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*^b.

Yea, let me say also, as in him, united to him, being members of his mystical bo-

^z *Isai. xl. 1, 2.*

^a *Ver. 9.*

^b *Eph. i. 2, 3.*

dy, deriving sap and nourishment from him, having entred the conjugal relation with him; so they are justified, in claiming the robe of his righteousness, as theirs; he hath put it on them; which is a robe not only pure and spotless, but wisely fitted to cover all, yea, the most minute member of his body; the most mean, and, in self-view, the most worthless: and 'tis as carefully thrown over them. The head takes care of all; and every member may justly claim a share in his favour: but Jesus is ever mindful; and he is ready, with the robe, also to deck with all divine ornaments, agreeable to the great love he manifested to *Jerusalem*; in words that may be applicable here: *^bI clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers skin, and I girded thee about with fine linnen, and covered thee with silk: I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands. and a chain on thy neck. And I put a Jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linnen, and silk, and brodered work;---And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect thro' my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God. Tho' these words, delivered by the prophet, did imme-*

^b Ezek. xvi. 10—14.

diately

diately refer to the *Jewish* church; yet, they seem suited to a farther and spiritual view: as the *Jewish* church was, in many things, a type of the gospel church.

And, I would yet add, that as they may claim this robe of righteousness, being united to him, he having diligently, and painfully wrought it out for them, and generously and freely put it on them; so, also, are they justified, in claiming with it, their title to the heavenly inheritance thro' him: for he obey'd, he fulfill'd the law, he died, and he perform'd all the conditions of the covenant of works in our stead; according to the stipulation of the covenant of grace, respecting us; and thereby, thro' the dignity of his person, being God-Man, he hath *obtain'd eternal redemption for us^c*; not only from the guilt contracted by our sin, which rendred us obnoxious to the divine wrath, and brought us under an obligation to punishment temporal and eternal; but, he hath obtain'd for us redemption also from our captive state, and made way for the removal of all obstructions; *blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: And having spoil'd principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it^d*. Now, if he has removed the curse

^c Heb. ix. 12.

^d Col. ii. 14, 15.

by *being made a curse for us*^e, and having fulfill'd the law, magnified it, and made it honourable; what hinders but that we shall with him share the heavenly inheritance? Shall our unworthiness prevent it? let us remember, he has merit enough; and, if we are united to him, we have full freedom of access, to lay our claim to it: shall our enemies hinder us? to our unspeakable comfort, he has trampled 'em down under his feet; and the redemption is eternal and compleat: yea, surely, as head and representative, he hath made peace, and did it, not only for the children then in being, or brought forth; but as a tender, prudent parent, many times makes provision for those that are yet unborn; so Jesus, *peace being made thro' the blood of his cross*^f. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contain'd in ordinances*^g, broke down the bar of separation betwixt Jew and Gentile. *And came and preach'd peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh*^h; and, in consequence of this peace, thro' the blood of Christ, the heirs of eternal life have a right to the promised inheritance. And,

Here I may add and improve his prayer, *John xvii. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me*

^e Gal. iii. 13.

^f Col. i. 20.

^g Eph. ii. 15.

^h Ver. 17.

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thro' their word. The peace, that he made, by doing and suffering, is of equal extent with this prayer; and will assuredly be extended to all those that are united to him, or that believe on him. Let me now dismiss this, and proceed to the

3d. Term accepted; those united to him, as branches to a vine, deriving nourishment from him, are in him accepted: his name is called upon them; he owns them as his offspring; they are numbred among the saints thro' him; and this Union with him, *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*ⁱ. God takes us as sons, for, and thro' him: *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* 'Tis impossible, that any soul should be united to Christ, thro' the Spirit, in grace and love, and yet, not be acceptable to the father of mercies: and then, having taken them as sons, accepted in the beloved; as an evidence and privilege thereof, he gives them childrens portions, which are already prepared; and to such souls, have been, are now, and will, thro' eternity, be handing out. *Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ*^k.

As personally new creatures, we stand accepted in the sight of God; and while he

ⁱ Eph. iii. 15.

^k Eph. i. 3.

is saying, to the wicked and rebellious, *What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou should'st take my covenant in thy mouth^k?* he is saying concerning these, *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice^l.* And again, *Their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar^m.* Not only our persons, but our services, if there be this vital, conjugal Union between Christ and our souls, are accepted thro' him, and for his sake: and, when this is the case, how can any thing less than support in spiritual life, whilst here; and the enjoyment of future happiness, be the consequence of it? Again,

This Union, known, felt and experienced, gives the soul a boldness to go to God; opens the door of access to him, as Christ is the way of acceptance, *in whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of himⁿ*; and the more lively our faith is, when seeking divine favours, the more certain we are, that we ask things agreeable to the divine mind; and the greater is our confidence, that our requests shall be granted. Shall the requests of such, made in faith, be granted? Have they boldness and access with holy confidence in their head, that they shall be supplied? and, can souls, that have tasted the goodness of the

^k Psal. l. 16. ^l Ver. 5. ^m Isai. lvi. 7. ⁿ Eph. iii. 12.

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Lord, ask less than support in spiritual life, than communion and fellowship? can their desire be satisfied with, or, can they ask less than ability to live to his glory whilst here, and, afterwards, a reception to the mansions of glory, to *be for ever with the Lord*? Surely, no; they cannot, when in their proper frame. The apostle *John* viewing the privilege of sonship, with the nature and behaviour of such, observes, that *if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight* ^p. The scriptures abound with encouragements and assurances, that those, who are in Christ, believe on him, have annexed thereunto all needful support, for spiritual life here; and the certain enjoyment of happiness hereafter: some of these we attended to in the terms above. I shall add, That, as they are in him, members of his mystical body; branches of the true vine, sprouts from him the root: so, they are not only acquitted, justified and accepted; but also allow'd to come with boldness to the throne of grace, thro' him, and for his sake. And

4^{thly}, They are beloved by the Father. As he hath loved the root, and continues so to do, and hath pronounced that good; so, he

• 1 Thess. iv. 17.

p 1 John iii. 21, 22.

loves

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loves the branches, and will pronounce them, as growing on the stock, good also, to the confusion of all their enemies. As he loves the head, he also loves the members: tho' many, among them, seeing many deformities and blemishes in themselves, are wondering and amaz'd, that God should love them; yet, thus he does. And, as Christ has called them fair, so the Father respects them in him: and, as such, Christ will assuredly present them at the last day, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*. As the Father loves the *holy child Jesus*, so he loves his children. 'Tis part of our Lord's mediatory prayer, that his love may be manifested; *that the world may know, saith our Lord, that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*.

As Christ is the object of his Father's highest love: so the children are beloved for his sake. This is the purpose, this, the resolve of heaven: *I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed, also, will I make to endure for ever*. The covenant with the son, and the love express'd towards him, have respect also to his seed; and, as such, to every member of his mystical body. And if this

^r Eph. v. 17.

^s Acts iv. 27.

^t John xvii. 23.

^v Psal. lxxxix. 27, 28, 29.

love,

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Love, in, for, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, is unalterable ; and cannot be removed by all the powers of earth and hell ; surely then, support in spiritual life, and enjoyment of future happiness, are consequent upon it. That this Love cannot be removed from those united to Christ, is what the apostle glories in ; and braves the force of all our enemies with ; *I am persuaded, saith he, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers,---nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord^w : for his sake, laid up in him, manifested thro' him.*

If God lay the Son of his love in his bosom, there must the children lie also : for, they are near to him, *flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone* : his will is thus expressed to his Father ; *I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my Glory. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one^x.* Oh ! amazing love ! wonderful dignity ! Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestow'd upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.----Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but, we know, that when he (Christ) shall appear, we shall

^w Rom. viii. 38, 39.

^x John xvii. 24, 23.

be like him; for we shall see him as he is ^v. Oh! dazzling glory! things beyond our utmost stretch of thought! We may, sometimes, happily lose our selves in the pleasing idea; but we shall find it far beyond our conception; and, not unlike to the apostle's case, who, being *caught up into paradise, heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful, or possible for a man to utter* ^z. Our power of conception doth, by far, exceed our ability of expression; but this opening prospect or scene of divine love, rich, royal favours, thro' Christ, vastly exceed both: of which blessedness, all those that are united to Christ, have already partook, in a measure; and are interested in, unto the full. Such persons, *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds, thro' Christ Jesus* ^a. These happy ones, shall, according to the apostle's prayer, *know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge* ^b, in order to their being *filled with all the fullness of God*. Oh; how great the favour! how exceeding rich the priviledge! God loved them, as the objects of his choice; and, in the fore-view of this Union, antecedent to it; and out of that love, he gave them to Christ to redeem: *God commendeth his love towards us, saith the apostle, in that while we were*

^v 1 John iii. 1, 2. ^z 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. ^a Phil. iv. 7.
^b Eph. iii. 19.

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yet sinners, *Christ died for us*. He gave them into his hand, that he should seek them, unite them to himself, keep them, and bring them to glory; and, upon his undertaking the great work, promised to hold his hand, to strengthen him, to subdue his enemies, and highly to exalt him. These things, the following scriptures abundantly testify. *“I have found David, my servant: with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand shall be establish’d: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness, and my mercy shall be with him: and, in my name, shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right-hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also, I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. And the prophet Isaiah hath introduced God the Father and the Son covenanting; or, the Father promising a reward to his righteous servant, Chap. xlix. 3, Christ, speaking of the Father, saith, And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Declares what he answered, Then I said, I have laboured in vain,*

ε Rom. v. 3.

α Psal. lxxxix. 20—27.

*I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God^d. Afterwards God the Father saith, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: And I will preserve thee, and give thee, for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew your selves: They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat, nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And, I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-ways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the North and from the West, and these from the land of Sinim. And these passages do also verify what we have been attempting to prove or shew (viz.) that those united to Christ, shall receive support in spiritual life, and enjoy eternal happiness. This support and enjoyment are consequent on Union, or connected with it: And, therefore, even in these views of their being in him; for his sake acquitted, justified, accepted, yea, beloved, Christ may say, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* And*

^d Isai. xlix. 4, 8—12.

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It may be said, for the consolation of Christ's people, God's own *dear children*, that, as sure as Christ lives, they *shall live also*. In these views mentioned, it will be no injury to our text, should we enlarge and diversify it; and, suppose our Lord to intend in these words, as much as tho' he had express'd himself thus. As I live acquitted, so shall ye; as I live justified, so shall ye live justified; as I live accepted, so shall ye; as I live beloved, so shall ye. Or, as speaking in the words to every saint now on earth, tho' mourning or despised; thus, As I live in my father's embraces, so shall ye; and as I live honour'd and exalted, so shall ye. *° We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* And, as he hath loved every member of his *†*, *washed them from their sins in his own blood, made them kings and priests unto God, and his Father*; to offer up spiritual sacrifices here; so surely they shall reign with him hereafter. Where would these members be? where does the saint, in his right frame, wait, hope and desire to be? The great apostle, surely, spoke the sentiment of the whole, at such a season, when he said, *‡ having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.* Where will the head have the members to be, through

° Heb. ii. 9.

† Rev. i. 5, 6.

‡ Phil. i. 23.

long eternity? surely with himself; this is his will, this his request; *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.* None but those are united to him; and, for them, there are, in his Father's house, many mansions---He is gone before to prepare a place for them; and as sure as he is gone, ascended above, so surely will he return; gather all his saints together; take them to himself; and they shall reign with him for ever. I close my argument with the apostle's declaration or conclusion, who viewing *Adam* as a federal head to all his natural seed, and Christ the federal head of his people, and let me add of this seed, or the root from whence these branches grow, saith, ^h *Therefore, as by the offence of one, Judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life:* and, most certainly, this is the case, (with regard to those members of his mystical body, those branches in him the vine, those united, as we have before shewn. Thus support in spiritual life, and enjoyment of future happiness, are consequent upon this Union with Christ; and are ascertain'd as a necessary effect. Let the happy subjects prostrate themselves before the God of grace and mercy, that had pity on them in their low estate; and, with hearts

^h Rom. v. 18.

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raised in thankfulness, ascribe all their hopes to his boundless, and undeserved grace; manifested thro' Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. But, leaving this, I proceed now to consider

Effect II. Another effect or fruit of this Union: which will further shew us, how the saints support in spiritual life, and enjoyment of future happiness, are consequent on their Union with the Lord Jesus Christ. *Where this Union is, there is a communication of spiritual strength, or supplies suitable to the wants of the united; such as capacitates the soul, in the use of means, under the Spirit's influence, to bring forth fruit unto holiness:* agreeable to the change of state and relation, are the subsequent fruits. Now, if ye are *made free from sin, and become servants to God*; as is certainly the case of the united, of whom we treat; *ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.* Are they in Christ? is the gift eternal life thro' him? and, shall they share in that happiness? Is that life begun here in grace, by vital Union with Christ, and shall it not be maintain'd, till it is consummate in glory? The gifts of God are without repentance.

ⁱ Rom. vi. 22, 23.

There is always constant communication between Christ and the believer, the soul thus united to him: tho' there may be various degrees of supply, according to the place the member hath in the body. ^k *But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. As the place in the body, so also the measure of strength afforded to it; the degree of communication is always according to the sovereign pleasure of the wise dispenser of all mercies. ^l Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? Nevertheless, the members are all members: tho' they have not all the like gifts, or do not enjoy the more honourable places in the body, so neither need, nor have the same degree of supply; yet each hath a supply, and that from time to time, as well as the other members.*

Vital Union and communion are inseparable between Christ and the believer: where the one is, there is the other; without Uni-

^k 1 Cor. xii. 18.

^l 1 Cor. xii. 27—30.

on, there is no communion; and where communion is, there is Union. As in the natural vine, if the communication of the branches with the root was stopt, the branches, or any one of them, notwithstanding their Union, or conjunction with the stock, would be fruitless, wither and die. So there is an analogy in the spiritual vine, or the Union between Christ and the soul, as he is pleased to represent under the metaphor of a vine and branches: ^m *As the branch cannot, saith our Lord, bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.* In these words our Lord teaches, how it is that they bring forth fruit, not only by being in him, join'd to him, simply consider'd, but by his being in them also; importing, not only Union, but communion, in the very mode of expression, and abundantly in the metaphor: for every one that has but a small knowledge of vegetation, knows the need of the communication of sap. And still, a stronger evidence of communion, are his words, ⁿ *without me ye can do nothing*, i. e. without Union with me, there is no communion, severed from me *ye can do nothing*. And, were it possible to continue always in a state of Union, without communion, they never would

^m John xv. 4, 5. ⁿ Ver. 5.

do any thing agreeable, bear fruit, &c. Whenever the christian bears fruit, we know he hath Union and communion with Christ: who knows or feels it, as he once said concerning the poor woman who touched him,
 ° *that virtue had gone out of him.*

We have a notable instance of our need of constant supply, and evidence that we are at all times dependent; and, that all our springs of spiritual life and motion, are in, and derived from Christ, in the case of *Peter*. After our Lord had been comforting his disciples, instituting his supper, declaring his great regards for them, he immediately acquaints them of his prayer, and particularly addresses himself to *Peter*; saying, ^p *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* *Peter* no sooner apprehends, that he spake of the trial that would arise thro' his sufferings, and the advantage the enemy would labour to make of it; but he, as one full of love and zeal, immediately answers; *Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death.* But our Lord, who knew an additional supply of virtue from himself, would be wanting in that trying season; and what supply would be handed forth, faith, *Peter*,

° Mark v. 30, 32.

^p Luke xxii. 31, 32, 33, 34.

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It tell thee, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. Sad news indeed! to one that had been supping with his Lord, had, doubtless, found his soul much refreshed. And, therefore, as one whose natural spirits are refreshed and invigorated, by the nourishment of food in some late meal, he goes forth in the time of trial, in that strength, and with the fore-mentioned resolution; and agreeable hereunto, draws forth the sword, when his Lord was apprehended, offends his foes, cuts off *Malchus's* ear; neither did he withdraw, or return it to its place, until he receiv'd his Lord's orders^a: But, alas, this warmth of zeal in *Peter*, this flow of affection, would be born down, unless there was a fresh and large supply, suitable to the pressure of the affliction or trial. This fire of love, that flam'd so high, would soon exhaust it self in such manner, as only to be cover'd in its own embers; unless there were administred, not only objective fuel, but inward supply; not only the love of Christ visible, but grace imparted were needful, to lead out the soul in a proper manner, toward the object. He view'd the Saviour, the mighty one, stand firm amidst all his sufferings; prosecuting, with inimitable constancy and ardor, the great design, in the work of redemption. But, notwithstanding this, the last supply re-

^a John xviii. 10, 11.

ceiv'd tho' in a large degree, being exhaust-
 ed, with regard to its nourishment, or the
 vigour produc'd; *Peter* looks on, and
 looks in vain, or worse; his courage rises not;
 his love doth not now enflame his zeal; the
 mournful scene sinks his resolution, and
 calls up his fear to provide for himself. And
 now, the hero thus far left, gives manifest
 evidence, of his then cowardice of soul;
 the flesh was weak, the temptation strong,
 and, therefore, when a maid charges him,
 earnestly looking upon him, with being one
 of those that were with Jesus^r; he that
 drew his sword in the garden, now denies
 that he so much as knew him^s. In a little
 time, he was charg'd again by another per-
 son, saying, *Thou also art of them*^t; and,
 he again strenuously denies. A third, in
 about an hour's time, confidently charges
 him with being one of them, with the ad-
 ditional evidence of his being a *Galilean*^u;
 and, he again, as confidently denies^w. Thus,
 not only ceasing to be active for his Lord,
 but abandoning him in the most wretched
 manner, he denies that he so much as knew
 him, to whom he had so lately profess'd
 so much love; and, for whose cause he had
 manifested so much zeal. But now the
 cock crows, and his Lord, who had stood
 at a distance, by the withholding such supply

^r Luke xxii. 56. ^s Ver. 57. ^t Ver. 58. ^u Ver. 59.
^w Ver. 60.

and

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and influence of the Spirit, as would have been sufficient to have preserved from falling, turns and looks upon him ^x, doubtless, with love in his eyes; confident I am, 'twas in his heart; and some of the streams, being let forth into *Peter's*, drew the tears of godly sorrow from his eyes, under the influence of the Holy Spirit: had there been no fresh supply of grace and influence, *Peter* might have still continued to deny, instead of weeping on that account. That he should have altogether forgotten what our Lord spake to him on such an occasion, and with such particular circumstances, but at the beginning of the evening, doth not seem altogether probable; and had he so done, if our Lord had not wrought in and on the soul, he would not then have so remembered it, as to repent of his sin: sin is of a hardning nature, has a tendency to obliterate the best impressions, as well as render the soul unapt for the reception of them. The evangelists have all recorded the case, and whether we take the account separately, as 'tis represented by each, or the joint representations of all, it still stands as a lasting instance of our need of constant supply from Christ; and as an evidence of our dependance upon him at all times, in whatsoever we do that is pleasing to God, or profitable to our own, or others souls. Perhaps this may

^x Luke xxii. 61.

be thought, by some, an improper instance, either to prove, or to illustrate the point in view; because others may think this fall was a total apostacy from grace; but, I apprehend, the reverse is evident from our Lord's expression, who does not say, that he had prayed, that he might have faith restor'd; but, that his faith, which he knew would be thus reduced and weaken'd, might be strengthened, still supposing the abiding of the habit: which will be hereafter more fully proved, when it will be shewn, that saints persevere; as I have already noted, in the indissolubility of the Union. But I proceed in the proof of communion.

This Union is with him, who has in his hands, both by gift and purchase, all those spiritual blessings we need, or the Father of mercies has design'd for any of sinning *Adam's* sinful race. *John* declares for himself and others, that he dwelt among them; that they ^y *beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The apostle *Paul* delivers it as matter of comfort to the *Colossians*, that ^z *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell:* which intends his mediatorial, or communicative fulness, as one that had a sufficiency put into his hands for his people, answerable to all their wants; 'tis a full supply, or there is with him fulness for

^y John i. 14.^z Col. i. 19.

their

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their supply. And, as it is laid up in him, 'tis also at his dispose. ^a *For, as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickneth them: even so the Son quickneth whom he will.* As a further evidence hereof, Jesus tells us, ^b *the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For, as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* These words are certainly of more easy application, to the quickning persons dead in trespasses and sins, than to the general resurrection of the body. And, if there be this fullness, this prerogative, this power, shall not those united, have a communication constantly of this fullness, whose needs are many and great? if it were otherwise, how would it consist with the love manifested, and the design the apostle mentions, when he tells such, ^c *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:— That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, thro' faith.* He is our vital head of influence; in him is a large stock of living springs, which are derived to his members, thro' their Union with him, and the operation of the Holy Spirit: so St. John saith, ^d *Of his fulness*

^a John v. 21.

^b Ver. 25, 26.

^c Gal. iii. 13, 14.

^d John i. 16.

have

have all we received, and grace for grace. Which passage may signify both measure and the variety of the blessings of grace: all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, yea, the Spirit it self is his gift, in its inhabitation in the souls of men, as bestow'd by him. In the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were assembled, according to his direction, *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* And when, the multitude beholding, some wondered, and others asperfed them, as being drunken, the apostle *Peter*, in his defence, and accounting for what was then done, tells his auditory, That Jesus, *being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* He supplies to the body, and each member in particular, life, light, wisdom, increase and strength; that it may be said of him, he *fillet* *all in all.* Christ is a store-house, or treasury of all good things, in whom, by whom, and thro' whom, the Father of mercies supplies his children: thus prays St. *Paul* for the *Philippians*, or rather declares what God would do for them; *My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus:* the measure of supply is ex-

^c Acts ii. 4. ^f Ver. 33. ^g Eph. i. 23. ^h Phil. iv. 19.

ceeding large, according to his riches in glory. What a large expence of grace, those that have been thus in Christ, but a few years have had, they cannot account: what is yet laid up in store by infinite Love, is unknown, 'tis called ⁱ *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. A Treasury, whose riches exceed knowledge; neither the height nor depth of it is discoverable to us mortals. And who does, who shall enjoy those things, but his members, those for whom he hath already done so much, and given himself? ^k *For, even Christ our passover, is sacrificed for us.* Hath he for those shed his blood? what will he not impart? But again, who shall enjoy the fulness of grace, and all needful supply that there is in Christ? if not those to whom he hath already manifested so much love in deed, by taking them into this nearest relation; in word, by promise: as to his disciples, when he saith, ⁱ *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*; and again, ^m *Because I live, ye shall live also.* I say yet, who shall enjoy the good things laid up with him, but those in whom he hath wrought, quickning them by the operations of his Spirit?

Yet, as we have observed, there is, and appears to be a communication of supplies, suitable to our need; so, also, we should

ⁱ Eph. iii. 8.
^m Ver. 19.

^k 1 Cor. v. 7.

ⁱ John xiv. 14.

observe, that these supplies are handed forth, in manner, measure, and time, as infinite Wisdom directs ; so as may best answer our exigencies, prayers, waiting and expectation, and the glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in exalting the riches of grace ; ^a *Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* Our exigencies are many times very pressing, and a small supply will not answer our need, so as to enable us to surmount the difficulties that are before us ; we sometimes need strong faith, much grace, and gracious assistance. And, according to our exigencies, and our apprehensions of them, are our prayers : thro' want of a proper sense of our needs, many times our prayers are cold, languid, and attended with a great deal of indifferency ; when our wants are really great. Possibly the supply may be sometimes withheld, that we may be more sensible of our wants, and better fitted to estimate the mercy when it comes ; tho' many times we are prevented with mercies, yet sometimes God tries his children, by delaying to grant ; and so exercises their faith, their hope and patience ; but he always affords the supply, in such manner, measure and time, as will eventually appear to be most for his glory, and their real profit.

^a Eph. iv. 7.

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I would not, as this communication of which we treat, concerns their sanctification, be understood to leave out Father, or Holy Spirit, when I say these communications are by this Union with Christ. For, the sacred Three, the Trinity, are concern'd therein. The Father gave us to the Son to redeem; ° *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*; and, according to this will expressed, he is said to have ^p *saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* He made early provision for our sanctification, and, in pursuance of his eternal purpose, it takes place; the work of sanctification is begun and carried on; the grace given is laid out, handed forth; there are communications by Christ, to all the members of his mystical body. The Father laid up the rich treasure in our head, put it into safe hands, and, in his own appointed time, sends down the Spirit into our hearts. ^q *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And so also, the Father is said to meeten us for the heavenly inheritance ^r. God, even the Father, works in us, on us, and for us, by his Holy Spirit,

° 1 Thess. iv. 3.
^r Col. i. 12.

^p 2 Tim. i. 9.

^q Gal. iv. 6.

agreeable to the oeconomy in the method of salvation. Therefore the apostle makes use of this argument to the *Philippians*, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling: ^s *For, saith he, it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.* And, writing to the *Colossians*, he enumerates this favour, among others, thus, ^t *giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Thus, the work of sanctification, the great change of state and person; or of the disposition of soul, is equally attributed to the Father, as to the Son; and to both, by the agency of the Spirit.

This of which we treat, is also attributed equally to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit implants this principle at first; he takes these branches from the wild olive, and grafts them in the good; he takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to us. These things are agreeable to what our Lord declares, ^u *He will, saith Christ, convince the world of sin, and of righteousness.-- He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* The Holy Spirit supplies, from the store-house, fresh

^s Phil. ii. 13.^t Col. i. 12, 13.^u John xvi. 8, 14.

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power; and inclines to agreeable motion. All graces are derived from Christ to us, by him; and these, when derived, are from time to time, by him influenced, and drawn into action. This the church, or spouse, seem'd to be well acquainted with, when she addresses him in this pathetick language, *"Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* Tho' graces are imparted, the soil is so bad still, and so prone to corruption; that, unless the good Spirit of God nip the one, and cherish and encourage the other, we shall not have an opportunity to invite our beloved, to *come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.* And, from this operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the work of sanctification is carried on in the soul, he is term'd the Sanctifier; and ** the offering up of the Gentiles,* is said to be *acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

Yet sanctification is said to be of the Father. So Jude directs his epistle, *† to them that are sanctified by God the Father.* This, I conceive, is thro' the Son, or in him; there is no other way in which God discovers himself, as the Father of mercies, to any of sinful Adam's race. Paul and Sosthenes direct their epistle *‡ to the church of God*

^w Cant. iv. 16.

^z Rom. xv. 16.

^y Jude 1.

^z 1 Cor. i. 2.

which

94 *Happy Effects, or Glorious; &c. Effect II.*
which is at Corinth, to them that are sancti-
fied in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. And,
as sanctification is in, or through Christ,
so it also is by the Holy Spirit, as elsewhere
addressing the same persons, they say, ^a *But*
ye are washed---sanctified---justified, in the
name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of
our God.

Thus wonderful are the ways of God,
in the scheme of salvation, both in redemp-
tion and application ! which, tho' we are not
able sufficiently to fully to explore ; yet e-
nough of them may be known, especially by
those who have tasted that he is gracious, to
call for their highest praises ; and, while they
cannot comprehend the work of divine love,
perform'd in infinite wisdom, to engage
them to join the Psalmist in this acknow-
ledgment : ^b *The works of the Lord are*
great, sought out of all them that have plea-
sure therein. His work is honourable and
glorious : and his righteousness endureth for
ever. I should now pass to another effect ;
but,

Before I consider any other effects of this
Union, 'twill be necessary to answer an ob-
jection which may arise, concerning this
effect of which we have treated, (*viz.*)
that

Obj. Constant communication does not
seem to be a necessary effect of Union with

^a 1 Cor. vi. 11.

^b Psal. cxi. 2, 3.

the Lord Jesus Christ; neither do the aids, incitements, and influences of the Spirit, appear to be consequent upon Union; for then, the leaf of such branch must be ever green, and the branch constantly bear fruit, as there is a fullness of sap, and nourishment in the root. Again, if these supplies are consequent upon Union, they cannot fail; the soul must be always advancing in holiness, and conformity to Christ in behaviour; whereas, the contrary is evidently fact; for many of those that are united to Christ, have, at some seasons, no visible fruit; yea, are many times subject to very great declensions. Therefore, as these consequents, that seem so necessary to constant communion, are frequently wanting, they are an argument, that constant communion is not an effect of Union; and further, that all hope of support in spiritual life here, and the enjoyment of future happiness, founded on this effect of Union, must be very precarious.

Ans. In answer to the objection, I shall admit many things said therein.

2^{dly}, Shew that this necessity of bearing fruit constantly, having the leaf ever green, &c. is not an unavoidable consequence of the effect of Union, as before laid down.

3^{dly}, Shall attempt to account for the omission herein.

4^{thly}, Establish the truth of this second Effect.

1st,

1st, I easily admit that there is a fullness of sap and nourishment in the root; and those facts which are so plain, (*viz.*) that many of those united to Christ, do not, at some seasons, advance in holiness, and conformity to him in behaviour; that they are without visible fruit, and, that they appear subject to many declensions. 'Tis many times with these branches in the spiritual vine, as it is with those in the natural; they have their winters of adversity, their times of temptations, chilling seasons, *iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold*; as well as their sunshine of prosperity. Many times these grafts in the good olive, branches, in the best vine, *“trees of righteousness,* plants of the Lord's own right hand planting, are so barren, that we cannot judge concerning them, at those seasons, whether they are living or dead branches; viewing only their behaviour. But, in this case, in order to satisfy our selves, as in such case, with regard to a branch literally, men do; we must break the bark; look thro' the out-side, remove that, as we may come at the interior part, the least, last, and most hidden evidence of life. In our search after it, many times, while we only view how a person's behaviour agrees with his profession, which may be at sometimes very little, always too little; while we are poring on his

^c *Isai. lxi. 3.*

conversation, known, in the general, to us and others, we are apt to pass hard censures, we are, not only ready to say, that his conversation is defective, or not conform to the doctrines of Godliness; but we proceed to dubitate, whether he ever receiv'd the grace of God, or not; yea, perhaps, are ready too freely to declare on the negative side of the question. Now, did we, indeed, attend to such a conduct as becomes Christians, to those means that are allowable and requisite in such a case, in order to form our judgment with accuracy and certainty; we should then attempt to break the bark, which, literally, is done with more ease in the young and tender branch, than in the old, and ordinarily metaphorically also. But

Would you know whether some, without apparent fruit or leaves, are branches in the living vine, and have a communication of life, together with the means of increasing the evidences of it, from the root; do not satisfy your selves with common appearances only; follow them home, enter the most serious conversation, in the spirit of love and meekness; and, possibly, where you have rashly been ready to say, that the divine image, spiritual life, or Union and communion were all wanting, there you may be agreeably disappointed; by finding many lineaments of the one, some breathings, tho' with difficulty of the other, and

reason to entertain comfortable hopes concerning the latter. Remember, in this enquiry to use all diligence, you are looking for somewhat precious, that may lie hid or be obscured, by things that are vile, tho' in itself valuable; 'tis necessary, therefore, your care should be like the woman's looking for the piece of money which she had lost; and, if it is, you may have, many have had, an opportunity, by so doing, to call your religious neighbours to rejoicing.

But, when, to want of fruit and leaf, there are added falls into gross sins, it may be proper to suspend our judgment for the present, and wait to see whether there is a rising again by repentance. Many have (like as branches, by the blasts of blighting winds) through the blasts of temptations, appear'd as tho' they were wholly dead; destitute of spiritual life; who yet, in after times, have evidenced their Union and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ; rising again by repentance, and yeilding a produce of suitable fruit. This was the case with *David*, *Solomon*, *Peter*, and others, who are recorded in the sacred scriptures. But,

2dly, I am now to shew, in answer to the objection, that this necessity of constant bearing of fruit, having the leaf ever green, is not such a necessary consequent of this doctrine of Union, as that the Union cannot subsist without it. Constant bearing fruit, *i. e.*
fruit

fruit towards God, visible to men, and always advancing in holiness, are not unavoidable consequents of this doctrine of Union, as laid down; nor of this effect of it, against which the objection is form'd; and therefore, these not being on the branches, or found with the persons united, does not overthrow the doctrine it self; or what has been advanced as the effect of this Union.

Tho' we affirm, that Union and communion are inseparable; and, that there are measures of supply communicated, sufficient, in the use of means, under the Spirit's influence, for the bringing forth fruit unto holiness; yet, it is not affirm'd, that these means shall be always at hand; or, that our corruptions or temptations shall not sometimes prevent our using them; nor is it affirm'd, that the Spirit will always incite such persons; or aid such, and exert his power in their bringing forth fruit; therefore the consequences, in the objection, are not unavoidable. We, indeed, affirm, that the communication of grace, the means, and the influence of the Spirit, do all, sometimes meet; and, that they always concur in our bearing fruit unto holiness.

We do not use to say of a man, because he is living, or has the breath of life in his nostrils, that he is acting incessantly; so neither of a christian, that he is always bear-

ing fruit. The ^d wise virgins slumbred and slept. The lightness of such objections in reference to the literal vine and branch, and the communication betwixt one and the other, is too visible, to be particularly pointed out in this place; every one knowing that the branch thereof, tho' living, produces fruit but once in the year, pursuant to the will of the creator; tho' it partakes of the fatness of the root, and has constant communication with it. Again,

3dly, As a farther means profitably to remove the objection, I shall proceed to account for the omission noticed in the objection; on account of which there seems to be an inconsistency, both in the doctrine of Union, as laid down, and this effect, or consequent of Union, against which the objection is rais'd. In this attempt I would confine my self within the bounds of revelation, and those things that are within our sphere; many of the works of God, and the dispensations of his providence, especially in the permissive part of it, lying quite out of our reach.

And, in this accounting for the omission, the not bearing fruit constantly, in those united to Jesus Christ, let it be remembred, that tho' the number, magnitude, or beauty of the fruit, at any time, produced, by any

^d Matth. xxv. 5.

branch in this vine, is never otherwise than in proportion to the strength, and measure of grace imparted, and the influence of the Spirit; yet it hath pleased infinite Wisdom, even in this state of Union, to keep the creature dependent altogether; not only on the root, for a principle of spiritual life, nourishment and support, insomuch that our Lord has declared, *Without me ye can do nothing*; but also, on the divine favour, for the quickning, exciting, and enabling to put forth the principle of life in proper actions; so that no soul shall have ought whereof to boast before God. *For, who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* From this view we shall be able to account how it is, that there is any omission in bearing of fruit, even thus; it is, through a suspension of grace imparted, at least, in measure or degree, and a cessation of the operations of the Holy Spirit, in the use of means, or want of them, while corruptions are ever at hand, and temptations ready to excite them to motion.

As this is the account in general; so it also leads us to an enquiry, that may serve to draw out the matter more particularly or minutely (*viz.*) Why God thus suspends

c John xv. 5. *f* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

the

the kind and needful influences from those souls, to whom he has evidenced so much love in their Union with Christ? It seems to me doubtful, whether the enquiry can be answer'd fully; yet, 'tis possible, that it may be done, in some measure, satisfactorily: and there are too reasons, why God thus doth, I apprehend, obvious; which are as follow.

Reas. I. God may suspend his kind and needful influences, to shew his sovereignty, to debase the pride of man; let him see whence his strength is, and to learn the humble, to trust in him, and fear before him. We, who have obtained hope through grace, are, thro' the remainders of indwelling sin, and the subtilty of the adversary, very apt, when we have been largely and comfortably carried forth in any duties, especially, for some considerable time, to forget where our strength lies, and to be lifting up our selves; and this, perhaps, to the despising of, or having an evil eye towards others. Now, if God withdraw those larger measures of supply, and divine influence, which thus enabled us to behave well, and enlarged us in our walk; and our corruptions should prevail, insomuch, that no visible fruit is born; or to the causing our steps to slide; God may design hereby to let us know, what is in our hearts; as the best of men are not always, nor altogether acquainted with their own spirits, that we may take
occasion

occasion thereby, to humble our selves for past sins, and to behave more watchfully against future temptations, lest we contract fresh guilt.

God dwells in the soul not meerly as an ally, or auxiliary; much less as a subject; but, as a sovereign dwells in his kingdom, or court; who is not always publicly exerting himself in special acts; but on peculiar days, or occasions; tho' he is always taking care of the government, and security of the kingdom. Or, God dwells in the soul as a master in his family; who, tho' he is not at beck, as a servant; nor always encouraging with his smiles, yet, is always overseeing; is ever conversant about its preservation, by affording rules and directions; and, many times, preserves it, by his powerful help. Agreeable to these views, the Psalmist prays for assistance and support, and the restoration of his Favours; fresh and further manifestations of his presence and care; * *Restore unto me the Joys of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free, or royal, Spirit*: he does not appear to operate in us, as of necessity; but, voluntarily; when, in what manner, and as far as he pleases: so that he is sovereign still, and may suspend his influences when he pleases; and for such purposes, as may answer the designs of infinite Wisdom, in debasing the creature, and

* Psal. li. 12.

exalting the Lord alone. And this brings me to the other reason.

Reas. 2. God may suspend the kind and needful influences, to those to whom he has evidenced so much love in their Union with Christ; to chastize them; and vindicate his holiness; for their profit, and the example of others.

He may do it to chasten. We cannot but be sensible we deserve it; and our Lord has left it upon record, as an evidence that he is mindful of them, and their affairs; that as many as he loves, he rebukes and chastens^h: and, however some of his children, under his chastning hand, may behave in an unbecoming manner, which the wise man counsels us against, saying, *My son, despise not the chastning of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction*, of which this suspension or withdrawment is frequently a part; yet the design of God may, nevertheless, be mercy, as well as faithfulness. Tho' some bear correction in a fullen manner, and others grow weary of it, are discouraged, and ready to faint under it; yet the author to the *Hebrews* hath assured us, that *whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth; and scourgeth every son, whom he receiveth*.

God, chastning us for our faults, vindicates his holiness, manifests his displeasure against a sinful and unbecoming behaviour,

^h Rev. iii. 19.

ⁱ Prov. iii. 11.

^k Heb. xii. 6.
tho'

tho' in his children. He, indeed, does not see iniquity in them, with the eye of an avenging God, ready to execute his wrath upon them; because Christ has born their sins *in his own body, upon the accursed tree*: yet, he sees their disobedience, as a Father, with Love in his heart, and the rod of correction in his hand; tho' he has forgiven their sins, yet he will vindicate his holiness; as he has declared in the covenant with Christ; *'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.* By his suspension and withdrawment, he frequently testifies against their untoward behaviour; and, how heavy these stripes are, how sensible it renders them of his displicency with the way they have taken, those souls that have felt, best know; the complaints of the Psalmist and the church are proper evidences. But,

Let it be remember'd, when this suspension, or withdrawment of the divine influence, is in any degree, that while we look upon it as a chastisement, it must still be look'd upon, as design'd for our profit, in common with all other chastisements, different in kind. God never strikes his chil-

¹ Psal. lxxxix. 30-32.

dren in anger, as an enemy; but always corrects in Love. This the author of the *Hebrews* abundantly confirms, while he, at the same time, shews, that it is not always so with fathers according to the flesh: ^m *We have had, saith he, fathers of our flesh, which corrected us; and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastning for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby. And thus God is, by chastning, vindicating his holiness, and designing our profit; so the apostle after adds, ⁿ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. And again,*

As many times, the chastning of some is design'd for the example of others; so this method of correction may be, in a particular manner, design'd as a caution to the heady, the heedless; and to those, who, thinking that their mountain stands strong, have not had a proper regard, either to the direction of our Lord, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*; or the advice of the apostle, *Let him that thinketh he stands,*

^m Heb. xii. 9—11.

ⁿ Ver. 14.

take heed lest he fall. Many of the failings and corrections of the saints of old, were written for our instruction; and all the corrections of his people this day, have a voice of warning to all others who know of, and are acquainted with them.

Having thus attended to these obvious reasons, let me take a farther view concerning the withdrawment of the powerful influences of the Spirit, on either of the accounts mentioned, and see in what a comfortable apposite view, Jesus, our head, is represented in the sacred scriptures. Does God, as a sovereign, afflict? We must acknowledge he is just; we have transgressed; he is still gracious; and, tho' 'tis no more than we deserve, yet, thro' Christ, who is continually interceding, he is propitious to, and does many times abundantly favour us; gives the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and, in the mean time, his word assures us, that *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* These desirable seeds will spring up, the harvest will be answerable: these kind designs cannot be rendered abortive, cannot be, in any measure, frustrated. Tho' he may afflict, yet *his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* And, though many times,

° Psal. xcvi. 11.

P Psal. xxx. 5.

his children are much perplexed, either about the manner of their afflictions, their unlikeness to what others have been exercised with, or that they cannot see the end, or what particular use they can be of, and perhaps this of desertion, is as difficult to account for as most; yet we are assured in the general, that ^a all things shall work together for the good of *them that love God, who are called according to his purpose*: and this, saith the apostle, *we know*, or we are firmly persuaded, and assured of.

Well, does God, as a father, chastise? is it for our instability, our errings, our wanderings? Our Jesus is a rock; and tho' the fabrick be suffered to be shaken, it shall not be thrown down. Tho' the winds and waves of temptation may arise, and the lofty surges may shake us; yet the foundation to which we are united, stands firm, unmoved, is immoveable. 'Tis the foundation God has laid for the support and welfare of his people, and call'd upon them to attend unto it; ^r *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation, a stone*; denoting solidity and duration: *a tried stone*; it has been tried by God, by men, and by devils; and hath always been found to answer what it was design'd for: and, as the design was great, with regard to the Divine glory, and the believers comforts, 'tis justly

^a Rom. viii. 28.^r Isai. xxviii. 16.

stiled, *a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation*: and, as an additional honour to this foundation, 'tis declared, as well as for the encouragement of those who build, or are built thereon, *he that believeth shall not make haste*; or as the Septuagint, *shall not be confounded*: hereunto agrees the explication, or rather application of the words by the inspired writer, *Rom. ix. 33. Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed*; and *St. Peter* saith, *shall not be confounded*. And, therefore, from this relation to Jesus, and the support and help he affords his people amidst all their shakings, we may, with propriety, use the Psalmist's words, concerning the good man; *' Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand*. Jesus, the foundation, the corner stone of the building, is a living, a life-giving stone, and enables those united to him, to put forth fresh acts of spiritual life. Again,

Have we grieved the Spirit? And hath he suspended his operations? Has our fruit fallen, and the leaves of our profession been shaken off, as leaves from trees by the winds in Autumn? Has this been thro' neglect to watch and pray, and use all the means of grace; and thro' the power of indwelling sin; the remainders of corruption within, the strugglings of the old man, the

* 1 Pet. ii. 6.

† Psal. xxxvii. 24.

unregenerate part ; together with temptations from the world and the devil without ? Has this been the mournful case ? Has our God hid his face ? Do we not see him, hear from him, commune with him, as formerly ; nor feel the powers of the world to come ? Do enemies prevail against us, corruptions grow rampant, our old tyrants usurp the seat, from which they had been thrust down ? Are we mourning because our graces are weak, or inactive, seem to be sleeping, and, that we find not how to awake them, to call them up into exercise ? Such seems to have been the case with the church, when they poured forth their bitter complaint, thus ; ^u *But we are all of us as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee ; for thou hast hid thy face from us : yet their God did not leave them, neither was their hope removed ; they yet say, ^w we shall be saved ; and claim their relation to God ; ^x But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.*

Much like the afore-mention'd case, was that of the spouse, with regard to the drowfiness, the inactivity of her graces, and the prevalency of corruption ; which state she describes, not like one forsaken of her friend,

^u Isai. lxiv. 6, 7.^w Ver. 5.^x Ver. 8.

but

Effect II. *Answers to an Objection.* III

but thus, ^v *I sleep, but my heart waketh*: she was not as one dead or destitute of spiritual life, or understanding; tho' her graces appear'd to be in circumstances not unlike those of the faculties of the soul, when a person is not wholly a sleep, nor yet quite awake; she distinguishes the usual sound, the well-known voice that had been sweet and familiar to her: *It is, saith she, the voice of my beloved, that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* Tho' she was not in a state of total insensibility; yet such was the prevalency of corruption, the present state of indifferency, the drowiness of her graces, that she seems contented, at least disposed to put off her beloved, without complying with his request couch'd in the most endearing words, with a slight answer, fully discovering the spiritual sloth and disorder: ^z *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* This disposition appears not unlike that which Solomon elsewhere sets out, saying, ^a *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.* Or, it ^b grieves him so to do.

^v Cant. v. 5.

^z Cant. v. 3.

^a Prov. xix. 24.

^b Prov. xxvi. 15.

Have

Have these things, one and another, or all of them been the case of the church, or of a believer? may they be again; are they now the present case of any? I would say to each such, Soul, thou mayst, nay, oughtest to mourn, that the case stands thus uncomfortably betwixt God and thee: yet, be not discouraged, at least, not cast down; for the end of correction, by one means or another, is not destruction. This shall not, O soul, be always thy case; for our head will commiserate the members: *For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Are we cold, benumb'd, seemingly lifeless, much in the dark? It shall not always be so; Jesus, thy head, is the sun of righteousness, and he will rise in our horizon; yea, upon thee; he will enlighten, enliven, warm, and heal; God the Father has promised the blessing, saying, *But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.* The Lord will create a spring within; and call up thy soul to the beholding it; and thou shalt yet know that what he said to Ephraim, he is now speaking to thee, (*viz.*) *I am like a green fir tree; from me is thy fruit found.* Jesus can never forget thee; his voice thou mayst expect to hear,

^c Heb. ii. 18.

^d Mal. iv. 2.

^e Hos. xiv. 8.

Effect II. *Answers to an Objection.* 113

and to be enabled, in the hearing of it, and the vision of him approaching, exulting with the spouse, to say, ^f *The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills; triumphing over all difficulties, removing all obstructions.* The reflection hereon will be sweet, the repetition delightful, when thou shalt be enabled to say, in the words of the church or spouse, ^g *My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, and gone: the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.* Beautiful, indeed, is the representation of Christ's love to, desire towards his people, and of the delights that are prepared for them, to which he will assuredly call them; yet, all these representations fall vastly short of the things themselves; for which I can only refer thee to thy past tastes and experience.

Mourning soul, tho' thine enemies may have taken an occasion, in this time of divine withdrawment, to plough long furrows on thy back; and loftily to say, *Bow down that we may go over*, reproaching thy hope and confidence in God: and, also, tho' thou mayst, in the like bitterness of thy spirit, under the desertion, have wrote grie-

^f Cant. ii. 8.

^g Ver. 10, 11, 12.

vous things against thy self, having said at one time with the Psalmist, *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me*^h: and, at another time, with the prophet *Jonah*, that thou wert cast out of his sightⁱ. Should this be the present case, thou mayst, with the disciples apprehension, use their affecting address; ^k *Lord, save us, we perish*; and hope for the desired end. This leads me to return to the last thing propos'd, in answering the objection. And,

4^{thly}, I proceed to establish the truth of the second Effect, or consequent of Union, under that view in which we have attended to it. Now, viewing the circumstances with which we closed the last head, we yet say, there is, by this Union, even at such seasons, as we there mentioned, though not discoverable to the cursory view, at least in so ample manner as at other times, a communication of nourishment and spiritual strength; that the soul must, even at such season, say, ^l *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*: and will say, when brought forth, either to it self, or to others under circumstances like those from which it hath been freed; ^m *Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart*:

^h Psal. lxi. 2.ⁱ Jonah ii. 4.^k Matth. viii. 25.^l Lam. iii. 22.^m Psal. xxvii. 14.

wait,

wait, I say, on the Lord. Let thy discouragements be what they will, or ever so many or great. But

This mournful, melancholy, depressed state, although the soul is supported whilst walking in darkness, having everlasting arms underneath, will not always be the case of the believer; when the rod hath perform'd its office, it shall be removed; when what was design'd in this dispensation of providence is effected, the veil shall be taken away; supply of spiritual nourishment and strength shall have greater degrees; and sometimes, under the Spirit's influence, dispel those fears, scatter those glooms, and triumph over all opposition: then, such soul shall hear; then, thou depressed soul, thou shalt hear the voice of joy and gladness, like as the church did; ^a *For thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy redeemer, the holy one of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall be called. For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment, have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah*

^a Isai. liv. 5—10.

unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee. In the case we have been attending to, and the things suggested, especially the soul mourning, the Psalmist is confident, saying, ° *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* Then will a song of praise be put into their mouths, even such that they may sing with the Psalmist, p *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miery clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: or Jonab's language, to whom we have referred in the former case, will suit them in their reflections under the present scene, which is very different from the forementioned. q The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was round about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.* But tho' the purpose, the promise,

° Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6. p Psal. xl. 2. q Jonah ii. 5, 6.

and the covenant of God be firm and immoveable, and, though every individual member shares in the church's mercies, yet I will not say, this shall be the happy case of every lapsed believer in this life: God may see reason to cause some to go mourning all their days after their fall; but if found at Christ's right hand at last, as they certainly will, their light and joy will be exceeding great. Again,

The truth of the Contents of the second effect, may be evidenced, by the continuance of spiritual life: had that no supply, no nourishment, it would soon be extinct, as well as the natural life, in like circumstances. It might be as justly affirm'd, that the branch in the vine, literally, hath no communication with the root, when it hath neither fruit nor leaves, and yet is living; as to deny constant communication of nourishment, support, and spiritual strength betwixt Christ, the root, and this branch, which is still living and dependant upon him.

Shall we say the natural man, animal nature has no dependance on God, no nourishment when we are sick or weak? or, that we receive no strength from him, when we do not employ our selves in some action? surely no; neither let us then in the spiritual. The new man depends on, lives and receives from God, as much as the natural man,
both

both in its waxings and wainings: Tho' God is not with it as a necessary agent, that must always operate according to its nature, to the utmost of its power. He is not with his people, as fire among combustibles, that necessarily consumes. But,

If we further consider Union in a complex view of the metaphors, by which 'tis set forth, we shall see that there is, with Union, communication of spiritual nourishment and strength; and also, that the Spirit's influences, aids, the means, &c. these are, in consequence of Union, though not continual, especially in degree. And, in this case, we shall find, that many metaphors are made use of, because no one metaphor sufficiently sets forth all the advantages that accrue to the soul by it; nor gives a full and clear view of the Union it self.

Further, by thus consulting the metaphors, we shall be inform'd, that Christ is the original; or, that the honour of all the soul hath, is, or doth, is from him, through him, and due unto him. He is represented by the prophet and apostles^r, as *a foundation, a foundation stone: chosen, tried, sure, precious*, on whom we are built, and on whom we may safely build. *He is the chief corner stone*: as this metaphor implies relation to, and Union with the other parts of the

^r Isai. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. ii. 11.

building,

building, so it teaches us, that those united to Christ, have in him, support, as in a *sure foundation*; compact and strength, as in a *chief corner stone*. And, as the foundation of an edifice is many times hid, lies under ground, remote from the natural eye, tho' the understanding hath a perception of it; so is the support and strength of the Christian; 'tis not obvious to every eye, though many do, and Christians must perceive and confess, that they are upheld by the mighty power of God. As Christ is the foundation in this building, he is also said to be the *top stone*; shewing us, that he is the beginning and the end. Elsewhere we find this metaphor carried further, to the design of the building: *And ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together, for an habitation of God, thro' the Spirit.* Again, *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* The advantages in the spiritual building considered in the whole, either as present, or future, each part hath a share of. However great the honour, pleasure, or profit of this spiritual temple may be, through the divine inhabitation, each living stone hath, in its

^r Eph. ii. 20—22,

^s 1 Cor. iii. 16. chap. vi. 19.

relation, fellowship therein : each stone thereof is glorious, and will be glorified ; but how great the glory of the whole will be at last, we know not ; its honour exceeds comparison.

Again, he is represented as the vine, and we the branches ; he the good olive, and we grafts therein ; which metaphor, to the advantages of support and strength, mentioned, adds these ; life, nourishment, fatness, a disposition for growth, and bearing of fruit, the same in kind with the root, which is a peculiar advantage, and the very reverse of grafting literally : *For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy : and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if---thou being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in--and--partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.* So he is held forth to us, as the bread of life, and water of life. This metaphor of Union does not add an advantage of Union more than the forementioned, except cheerfulness ; it imports nourishment, and directs us to depend wholly on him, as the food, or supply of our souls ; and, as such, by faith to be often receiving, embracing, or applying him, as we do food for the body.

Again, he is the head of the body, and we members, in which relation some did not esteem him ; therefore the apostle saith,

^t Rom. xi. 16, 17.

And

" And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God: which representation of Union with Christ, adds to those advantages included in the preceeding representations; these, viz. sense, motion, honour and government: and teaches us, that as the head of the natural body is the source of life and motion to the whole body, the nerves and animal spirits having their rise there; so, Christ is the fountain of spiritual life and motion to all those who are united to him.

Further, he is united to his Church, and to every individual member of it as a husband: and this view gives the following advantages; glorious exaltation! *" Thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.*
 ----Together with gracious and righteous rule, leading and support, love and affection;
** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation----*and also, of adorning and provision; he has plenty of both, and liberally hands forth, as is evident in the following representation; *† Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over*

^u Col.^{ii.} 19.

^w Isai. liv. 5.

^z Zach. ix. 9.

^v Ezek. xvi. 8—14.

thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entred into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then I washed thee with water: yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oyl. I clothed thee also with broidred work, and shod thee with badgers skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a Jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidred work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oyl: and thou wast exceeding beautiful:-----for thy beauty it was perfect, through my comeliness put upon thee, saith the Lord.----It adds to these that of protection and security also; as elsewhere he saith; ² And I will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. Again, spiritual riches are added hereby; as the spouse has a right to enjoy the temporal riches of her husband; so, the believer has a right to all

² Hof. ii. 18—20.

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the blessings purchased by, and laid up in Christ. We have his name, and shall share in his fulness: ^a *For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.* If we are members with him, of that one body, we must needs, as members, participate of those things appertaining to the body in general. Yea, his church ^b *is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.* ^c *And, ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.* With regard to these things, viz. his love, endowments, and their sharing in his unsearchable riches, you may at leasure turn over the book of *Canticles*. But having thus endeavoured to remove the objections against, and also to establish the truth of this second effect, I proceed to consider the third effect of this Union,

Effect III. The third effect or consequence of Union, is, preservation in holiness, or final perseverance: wherein they share the blessings of the new covenant; one of the excellencies of which is, that supernatural assistance, which is convey'd by it unto believers. This will appear more evident, by considering several particulars. And thus,
1st, The Union it self is indissoluble, and is with the fountain of life, and all holiness:

^a 1 Cor. xii. 12.

^b Eph. i. 23.

^c Col. ii. 10.

Though I do not hereby intend, that the believer may not fall into sin; or, that the principle of grace is always active and victorious.

The indissolubility of the Union is evident, on viewing the cause of it, *viz.* divine love or favour. 'Tis in consequence of the Father's choice, and the covenant between Father and Son, and effected by the Holy Spirit. Now the purpose of God is as unchangeable as his nature, concerning which he declares, *"I am the Lord, I change not."* This immutability, as it is his glory, is, also, his peoples happiness; *for, therefore, the sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

Further, as his purpose is unchangeable, his covenant with the Son is inviolable, and, therefore, the blessings, granted to his people, through Christ, cannot be removed from them. The language of the Father is, *"My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also, will I make to endure for ever."* Thus the purpose of God, the covenant, the promise, all ascertain their final perseverance, and the inviolableness of the Union.

Again, this Union is effected by the Holy Spirit, who can preserve it, and is given to abide in every soul which is united to Christ,

• Mal. iii. 6.

• Psal. lxxxix. 28, 29.

by the power of God, in the implantation of a living principle, or by grace derived, to, or into the soul, from Christ, by his agency. Such are not denominated as *in the flesh*, but as *in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in them. ^e Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: And if any man has the Spirit dwelling in him, he is an abiding Spirit, and able to preserve. And, to this seed, these persons, God hath said, ^f *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* He is not given to, doth not abide in them, as an idle spectator; but, as a comforter under trouble, a helper in time of need: ^g *The Spirit, also, helpeth our infirmities.*

Further, this Union is proof against men and devils assaults. As neither Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, will break this Union, the purposes of grace altering not; so neither can men or devils separately, or conjointly break it. Concerning the sacred Three, we may use the words of the Psalmist; ^h *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations:* and, accordingly, proceed to say, in his language, concerning these united ones, *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: and the peo-*

^e Rom. viii. 9.^f Ezek. xxxvi. 27.^g Rom. viii. 26.^h Psal. xxxiii. 11, 12.

ple whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. Yea, the language of the Lord to every such soul, concerning the cause productive of this effect, is, ⁱ *I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* This love is not, I conceive, call'd everlasting with regard only to its being in God; but also, in respect of the time when fix'd on the subject, and on account of the immoveableness of it thence. Well then, this Union God will not break! Now,

We easily conclude men and devils cannot, with all their force and policy, break this Union; for what is said of the church, is applicable here, ^k that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; if not against the whole, not against any part, to its final destruction.

Wicked men, whatever their rage or malice may be, cannot: ⁱ *Be not afraid, saith our Lord, of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.*

Neither can our corruptions dissolve this Union, or cause it to be dissolved, strong as they are; Jesus did not love, choose, die at an uncertainty. No; he knew what we were, before the imparting the divine principle, that unites, or in uniting, and how ungratefully we should behave afterwards: he knew what was the price he must pay

ⁱ Jer. xxxi. 3. ^k Matth. xvi. 18. ⁱ Luke xii. 4.
down

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down for our redemption, the purchase of us, and all our blessings: he knew what supplies of grace must be handed forth from time to time: he knows, ^l *he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.* And the same knowledge, that he declared of *Israel* of old, may be applicable to *Israel* now; ^m *I knew, saith the Lord, that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.* As he knew what we were, and what we would be, what supplies of grace must be handed forth, and all this previous to uniting us to himself; he will not suffer our corruptions to dissolve our Union with him. What was the moving cause of bestowing the favour at first, is, and ever will be a cause of retaining it, and therefore he saith, ⁿ *For my name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off.* So that while we reflect on our transgressions and departures from him, with the deepest abasement of our selves, and abhorrence of our sins: yet we may speak forth the wonders of divine love, knowing until that be turn'd from its peculiar objects, this Union must remain. For I am, with the apostle ^o *perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor pow-*

^l John ii. 24, 25.

^m Isai. xlviii. 8.

ⁿ Ver. 9.

^o Rom. viii. 38, 39.

ers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If this Union is indissoluble, then, as under the former effect has been shewn, there is a constant communication to maintain the divine principle, tho' not always such excitings or assistances, as cause a produce of desireable or suitable actions, at all times; yet, there shall be a reviving: though there may be falls into sin, yet they shall not lose the divine principle; and, as the root bears fruit, so shall it be again excited to, and drawn forth in, proper acts. Grace, though it may be weak in its degree, yet it is in a state of progress, till it comes to perfection.

2dly, As this Union is indissoluble, and Union and communion are inseparable; so their preservation in holiness, or final perseverance is certain: further, as grace imparted, the divine principle implanted, the new creature formed, denominates such an holy seed, and *grace* cannot be corrupted, the *divine principle* imparted can't be lost, the *new-creature* can't die, the *true believer* can't relapse into a state of unregeneracy; the concatenation of graces compriz'd in either of the above terms ever remains. Jesus told the *Samaritan* woman, that whosoever drank of the water taken out of the well which their father *Jacob* gave, should *thirst* again;

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again; but, saith he, *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life*^p. Though there may be a remission of action, there can be no amission of the principle: and,

Where the principle is, there can be no commission of sin, inconsistent with a principle of grace abiding in the soul; or, no sin unto death, *i. e.* not considered in the desert, for sin deserves death, every sin, *the wages of sin is death*^q, but in the event: they may be corrected for them, but shall not be destroyed. Let us view the apostle *John's* words, as applicable to, and confirming the point under consideration; when he saith, *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*^r *Whosoever abideth in him [Christ] sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.* The apostle, 'tis plain, from several parts of the epistle, has no design in these words to teach us, that believers live without sinning; therefore, the words must respect, either the degree of sin, the manner of sinning, or the event: unless his words should be carried to intend the divine principle, which, as 'tis holy

^p John iv. 13, 14.
^s Ver. 6.

^q Rom. vi. ult.

^r 1 John iii. 9.

seed, remains impeccable. As to his intending the degree of sinning, this must not be restrain'd to any particular sin with regard to magnitude, except that against the Holy Ghost; eminent believers having fallen into some of the grossest of sins. Certainly, it is to be hoped, persons having received grace, do not multiply transgressions as others; neither can they, at all times, as others, sin without some oppositions before, remorse, or repentance afterwards; do not commit evil with greediness, as some do; which he explains when he opposes it to the former words, *He that commiteth sin, is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning; continues in it, doth it with pleasure, doth nothing else.* However, it may, without any strain, be applicable to the event, that *whosoever is born of God, sinneth not unto death;* ^u *If any man sin, faith our author, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins.*

There are many sins we commit, some, after many struggles, much opposition; some, through surprize; we are hurried into them e'er we are aware; these are our infirmities; and there are some we commit other ways. And thus we slide and fall; yet we shall rise again by repentance, through faith of the operation of the Spirit: ^w *A just man*

ⁱ John iii. 8. ^u 1 John ii. 1, 2. ^w Prov. xxiv. 16.

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falleth seven times, and riseth up again. ^x *The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you.* The grace of the Spirit, will make these branches, finally, victorious: notwithstanding, all the temptations to which they are exposed. He joins his aid for their assistance, and they overcome; ^y *because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* So that, amidst all their falls and foils, it may be said of them, as it was formerly of the Romans, that, *They were sometimes, 'twas true, overcome in battle, but never in war.* As with Union indissoluble, there is communion of a never dying principle of grace, and at certain seasons divine aids; so, they shall persevere in holiness, and conquer at last: ^z *Nay, we shall be more than conquerors, through him that loved us.* But, again,

3dly, The preservation in holiness, or final perseverance, of those united to Christ, appears evident; as the design of Union, or the implantation of the divine principle is holiness, or their sanctification. Therefore, they are broken from the wild olive, and engrafted into the good, and partake of the fatness thereof; for that end Jesus died, ^a *gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word:* He died to purchase ^b *a pecu-*

^x 1 John ii. 27.

^y 1 John iv. 4.

^z Rom. viii. 37.

^a Eph. v. 26.

^b Tit. ii. 14.

liar people, zealous of good works; for that end, there is a stock of grace laid up in him; yea, ^c all fullness; he is ^d full of grace and truth. And hence, Christ propounds the graces of the Spirit, as waters that never fail, that the soul shall never thirst ^e, or be totally, or finally deprived of; but they shall spring up into everlasting life ^f. And,

If their holiness and sanctification, be the design of Union and the implantation of the divine principle, and if they are to be presented *without spot*, they must be preserved in holiness; and so, they were given to Christ ^g; who hath spiritual and *eternal life* to give to whomsoever he will: yea, there is, if possible, yet an additional security of their preservation; they are in the Father's hands, ^h whence none is able to pluck them; and ⁱ are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.

The design of their being made living stones, and so laid on Jesus the foundation, was, that they might be a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices; or, as the apostle speaks of Jesus, and those to him united, ^k *To whom, i. e. Christ, coming, as unto a living stone, saith he, disallow'd indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye, also, as lively stones,*

^c Col. i. 19.^d John i. 14.^e John vii. 38, 39.^f John iv. 14.^g Chap. xvii. 12.^h Chap. x. 29.ⁱ Jude i.^k 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

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are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And shall these cease? cease totally and finally? Shall the purpose of God become of none effect?

¹ *Ye are, saith the apostle, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Will not God preserve his dwelling, his temple, his chosen people, his priests, that offer up spiritual sacrifices? Will not he, that is able, keep from falling, or restore them when fallen? surely he will.*

They must be preserved from total and final falling, or the most easy apprehension of the design, represented to us in their regeneration, will become frustrate. They must be preserved; the work of grace carried on: ^m *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.* Is it not as easy with God, to establish his ordinances with his people, as he hath done with the heavens, that have continued so long? hath he spoken in vain? No, no; His people, those united to Christ, were, are, and will be preserved ⁿ *by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation.* Further,

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^m Eph. ii. 10.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 5.

4thly, Preservation in holiness, or final perseverance, follows Union: for, as united to Christ, they have the Spirit sent down into their hearts; whereby, they plead with God as sons, crying, *Abba, Father*. The Spirit residing within, makes intercession for them, helping their infirmities, inditing suitable petitions, presenting proper objects, for the exciting of the divine nature imparted to becoming action: and by his continual or repeated aids and supply, the whole of the mystical body maketh increase; and so, also, does each member. Thus we have the apostle's example to direct our prayers to God; that he would grant us, *° according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner man.*

Yea, Christ dwells in them by his Spirit, and they abide in him. Thus he comforted his disciples, and with them comforts all believers ever since, by telling them, *° I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* And, as the Spirit abides in such, and Jesus Christ, by the Spirit; so, also, they abide in Christ: *° He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he [Jesus] abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

° Eph. iii. 16.

° John xiv. 16.

° 1 John iii. 24.

Again,

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Again, genuine evangelical obedience is an evidence of the divine power, favour, and inhabitation, wherever 'tis found; all which is manifested in the very being of, or connected with Union. *'Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* The Holy Spirit, at first, enters the soul by his gracious and powerful operation, working faith, love, and every grace; afterwards dwells in the soul, as Christ also doth by him, to renew, purify and sanctify; so we read of the renewings of the Holy Ghost, *'and, that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* Is not Christ in them to keep them? can we suppose his members can be torn from him by violence, or totally alienated by sin? How tender is man of all his members! how ready to preserve the smallest, or the least useful, to the utmost of his power! and, can we suppose Christ to be indifferent about any of the members of his body? Surely no; he is touch'd with a feeling of our infirmities. Did he lay down his life for the sheep, is he united to them, and will he suffer the wolf to devour? Doth not God dwell in them, even the Father? hath he not taken them for *'sons and daughters*; and will he not cause them to walk in his statutes and judgments? Are they not the temple of the

[1 John iv. 15.

2 Eph. iv. 24.

3 2 Cor. vi. 18.

living

living God? ^u *as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Who shall, what shall cause him to revoke his sentence? Nothing: he spake the word, and it stands fast for ever. Hath he pronounced them his sons, and shall they become the children of *Belial*? surely nay. The consolation of his people of old, is a cordial for these now; ^w *For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Blessed be God, that possession once taken of the soul, by him, in his inhabitation, is never lost! though, many times, the views of it may.

I further add, the Holy Spirit dwells in those united to Christ, as a sanctifying, sealing, and witnessing Spirit: he is their sanctifier. The apostle *Peter* speaking of purification in obedience to the truth, expresses himself thus, ^x *Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.* And, shall he abide in the soul, as such, and his operations, aids, or influences be totally and finally suspended? it cannot be; the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, and so are his designs.

He abides in them as a seal, a distinguishing mark, that they are separated for holy

^u 2 Cor. vi. 16.^w Isai. liv. 10.^x 1 Pet. i. 22.

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use, and a certain evidence of their future happiness; whence they are caution'd, not to grieve ^y *the Holy Spirit, whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption*; the last day, the time of the glorious completion of all their happiness: the Spirit of God cannot seal to a thing as certain, that is not; neither can any, ratified with the seal of heaven, as the heirs thereof, lose, either title or possession.

He is with them as a witness, ^z *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God.* He is given as the first-fruits of the heavenly inheritance, in that peace, love, joy, holy triumph he causes them, at some seasons, to partake of, and shall not the harvest be secure? Shall they relapse again into a state of wrath and eternal damnation? Then it would be difficult to prove, that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Again,

5thly, The prayer or intercession of Christ for them, as his given ones, his members, his spouse, is an abundant evidence of their final perseverance. Does the Father hear him at all times? Yes, he does; grants his requests, gives him the desire of his soul. Well then, he prays they may be kept from the evils of the world; that they may be kept through the Father's name; that they may be one in them, in some likeness as

^y Eph. iv. 30.

^z Rom. viii. 16.

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the Father in him: ^a *I in them, and thou in me.* Jesus pleads his blood, his merits; with these he goes, is gone into the holy place. He pleads for them as his members, his purchase; and how earnest and opportunely he doth it, under these views, our thoughts easily suggest. How should we plead, where we had interest, and could prevail by pleading, for a member of our body to be spared, or preserved unto us; or for our dear bought purchase to be secured from waste or destruction? And,

From what has been hinted, we may conclude, his prayer or plea is with certain success; and, herein they rejoice, and under pressures, encourage their souls, in that, ^b *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.* The author to the *Hebrews* is confident, that ^c *Jesus is able to save them unto the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Surely those united to him, are such as come unto God by him; and, as he is able, their relation speaks his willingness to save them; and he has, as we have seen before, made intercession for them, and he, now, lives to do it. They shall persevere to the end. Yet again,

^a John xvii. 9, 11, 22, 23.

^b 1 John ii. 1.

^c Chap. vii. 25.

6thly, This Effect or consequence of Union we have been pleading for, is further evident, from their having, through him, an interest in all the promises of the covenant of grace: those promises are many, and full; and may well be called *exceeding great and precious promises*. There are, among various, some adapted to this of preservation in holiness, or final perseverance; such as these, the fear of God to be put into their hearts; the manifestations of himself to them, and that he will afford all needful supplies. There are promises to them of good, of heaven, and happiness; yea, the full enjoyment of God, through Christ, in mansions afore prepared^d; of the participations of those joys that are in the presence of God, of the pleasures that are at his right hand, which, with regard to the greatness, number, or exquisiteness, are as yet unknown: *For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*. Now, could this Union be dissolved, grace be totally lost, or the soul not finally persevere, these things could not be theirs, nor they enjoy them; but, on the contrary, the portion of the unbeliever must be their lot. But, blessed

^d John xiv. 2.^e Isai. lxiv. 4.

be God, this cannot be the case; the promises in Christ Jesus are all *yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us^f*; of whom are all the united *in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption^g*.

They are denominated such to whom the promises belong. Through the influence of the Spirit, when grace is in exercise, they are ready each of them to say to God, as the Psalmist, *^h I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.* 'Twas by the same gracious influence and assistance, that the apostle had to say, at the close of life, *ⁱ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day:* and, by the same Spirit proceeds to assure us, it shall be given not to him only, *but unto all them also, that love his [the Lord's] appearing.*

They are denominated such to whom the promises of perseverance belong: they are called, the righteous that shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in his holy hill; as he shall that *^k walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.* These, the united to

^f 2 Cor. i. 20.^g 1 Cor. i. 30.^h Psal. cxix. 112.ⁱ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.^k Psal. xv. 1, 2.

Christ,

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Christ, are the persons whose hands are clean : and when the enquiry is made by the Psalmist, ¹ *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And, who shall stand in his holy place?* The answer is, *he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.* And 'tis further, by way of encouragement, assurance, and description, added, *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him.*

These united ones are the just as justified, whose path *is the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* They are the persons possessors of faith : and, viewing any of the promises exhibited, in a conditional form, has not God engaged to work those things in them? has he not said, ^m *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me?* Has he engaged his presence, and the implantation of his fear, for such purposes? And will not the Spirit excite and enable them, at times, and in a measure, to perform those things he desires? He will. We are encouraged hereupon to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. ⁿ *For it*

¹ Psal. xxiv. 3—6.

^m Jer. xxxii. 40.

ⁿ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

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is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

We have, in one passage concerning their preservation, the power of God, the purpose of God, and the means join'd together, thus, *° Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.* Their head has promised, he will *never leave nor forsake them^p.* And will he always hide his face? Ever chide? He will not surely! He will appear, afford them supply, tho' they may have fallen by their iniquities, and walked in the dark; and then their language will be, *¶ I can do all things through Christ, which strengthneth me.* Repentance and remission of sins are his to give, *† Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* Is he thus exalted, and with such design, and have not they already shar'd the blessing, and shall they not again? He has compassion, he will remember and commiserate his members.

It must be confest, though final perseverance be a consequence of Union, yet the sense and apprehension of Union, and so of its consequence, may be greatly interrupted and darken'd, through the aboundings of

[°] 1 Pet. i. 5.
[†] Acts v. 31.

^p Heb. xiii. 5.

[¶] Phil. iv. 13.

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corruptions, falls into sin, sore distresses, and divine withdrawments at such seasons. A few examples will evince this fully, and set it in a clear light. *Israel* of old complain'd God did not regard or answer their prayers; and they receive for answer, ' *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* *Heman's* case seems like what we have mentioned; ' *Lord,* says he, *why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die, from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* And *David's* language, after a grievous fall into sin, was, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness* ^u.

Yea, the sense and apprehension of Union, and its consequences, may not only be weaken'd and darkened; but a saint may question either. The influences of it on the soul may be suspended for a time, the sensible effects and benefits, yea, the comforts of Union may disappear for a season; yet the Union is nevertheless indissoluble and inseparable. This is much as the case was with Christ, when about to suffer, and

^s *Isai.* lix. 2.

^t *Psal.* lxxxviii, 14, 15.

^u *Psal.* li. 12, 14.

when

when suffering on the cross: there was then an interruption of those joys the Deity had convey'd to the soul, and, when wrath enter'd, thence proceeded that amazing cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Yet the Union between the divinity and humanity of our Lord was firm, and the humane nature was supported by the deity or divine. So the saint under chastisement, may enquire, as our Lord, or express himself with *Job*, saying, "*I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:*" Yet 'tis the power communicated by Union with his head Christ Jesus, that upholds his spiritual life, and enables him to enquire in deed after a God that hides his face. I close this Effect of Union, joining in the apostle's request to God, or rather his praise of God. And, O that I could, with him, say of each of you, "*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ: that in every thing ye are enriched by him.*" 'Tis my desire, and my prayer to God, that it might be thus; and, for this cause, I labour. However, as many of you as have received Christ, He ^v shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless

^v *Job* xxiii. 8, 9.

^z *1 Cor.* i. 4, 5.

^y *Ver.* 8, 9.

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in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus am I led to,

Effect IV. The last Effect, or consequence of Union with Christ, which is glorification: the remotest of the golden links, or joyful consequences, which are the result of, or certainly follow this Union; is *glorification*, in the extensive signification of the term. God is faithful, who hath called them into fellowship with his Son; and, as this holy calling is the result of purpose, so there was an end design'd, and that hath been declared; God has not left ought for man to find after him: ² *For, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* These things are so linked, and joined together, in the design and purpose of God, that where one of them is, there either is, or shall be the other: the soul that is the subject of one, shall be of all.

Glorification is considered either immediate, in this present life, or at the termination thereof, or at the glorious morn of the resurrection, which is perfect and compleat.

What is considered as immediate glorification, is either personal and imperfect, or relative and perfect.

² Rom. viii. 30.

'Tis personal and imperfect, as their sanctification in this life is, and is ever commensurate with the measure of grace receiv'd, the exercise of it, and the privileges conferred. ^a *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* These holy ones are the excellent ones of the earth^b; and they are the more visibly, or eminently so, as their graces are drawn out into exercise; therefore as the apostle saith, ^c *Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church; watch, pray, strive, ^d that ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.* This is, certainly, our glory, to excel; this excelling is still proportionate to grace receiv'd, and grace in exercise: this is glory, resulting from a privilege conferred, as it was given to us; and so, also, is the glory or honour of relation to Christ, as members; to God, as sons or daughters; of being the favourites of heaven, denizens of the best, and most honourable city. But,

If we view glorification as relative, 'tis then perfect at once. We are no sooner join'd in Union, become members of his mystical body, but we are glorified in our head. ^e *For, whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it: or one mem-*

^a Prov. xii. 26. ^b Psal. xvi. 2. ^c 1 Cor. xiv. 12.
^d Phil. ii. 15. ^e Cor. xii. 26, 27.

ber be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. This is the case of the body natural, and analogous hereunto is the body mystical. *Now ye are the body of Christ, saith the apostle, and members in particular.* And elsewhere, *Ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.* Yea, as united to him, they are made now, by God, *to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*: he, their head and representative being set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: he, with whom their life is hid, is ascended above; yea, he is clothed with majesty and honour.

Again, at death the soul is made perfect in holiness, and enters into the joy of the Lord: at the resurrection, the soul and body are perfect in holiness, and enter into compleatness of glory.

The proofs of glorification being an effect or consequence of Union, are much the same as those mention'd under the former heads. Union itself is glory or honour, as it is a divine favour conferred upon the subjects; or such a real action of the divine being, as translates the subjects from a miserable and base estate, to one glorious and happy. *Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.*

Grace is the beginning of, or rather the

‡ Col. ii. 10.

‡ Eph. ii. 6.

‡ Psal. cxliv. 15.

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introduction to glory. 'Tis very excellent in
it self, truly glorious. At its very entrance
of the soul it obtains a victory, breaks the
dominion of sin, and gains some triumphs
over it. Grace is an earnest, a certain pledge
of glory; growth in grace is an increase of
holiness, and holiness is compleat only in
perfect glory. Those united to Christ, have
those graces wrought in them, that are the
first fruits of the Spirit, part of the har-
vest or compleatness of grace that will fol-
low, and foretaste of the heavenly blessedness.
These beget in them those longings the apo-
stle mentions, when he says, *"Our selves
also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit,
even we our selves groan within our selves,
waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemp-
tion of our body, or perfect and compleat
glorification.*

Under this head I shall consider briefly,
the proofs of the united's eternal glorifica-
tion; then their advances towards it in sever-
al stages thereof. And the

1st, Proof is drawn from the love he
bears to them, his members; no man ever
yet hated his own flesh; and from the de-
light he has in them, manifested in his re-
joicing in the view of their being thus united
to him. The delights that he had with the
Father before the worlds were formed, did
not hinder him from viewing and ⁱ rejoicing

^{*} Rom. viii. 23.

ⁱ Prov. viii. 31.

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in the habitable parts of his earth: and my delights, says Wisdom, were with the sons of men. His was a Love, that sorrows and sufferings, beheld previous to this vital and conjugal Union, could not allay. 'Tis a love that has been tried, sorrows manifold could not quench it. ^k *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:* 'Tis a flame that will surmount, go through, or be visible on the surfaces of difficulties. Death could not quench it, ^l *having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end:* he still loves them; he loved them not only to the end of his life, when expiring on the cross, but to the end of their lives, and will love them through all eternity.

'Tis a fix'd immoveable love, the powers of darkness, with all their policy and force, could not cause it to alter: no; neither did the stroke of divine justice cause it to remove from its objects; but, on the contrary, he seem'd to hasten to meet it, to finish his great design, and give the strongest evidence of love. How full of love is this expression, ^m *I have a baptism to be baptized with, alluding to his dreadful sufferings, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished.*

'Tis a love manifested not only in laying down his ⁿ *life for the sheep*, but also in the

^k Cant. viii. 7.

^l John xiii. 1.

^m Luke xii. 50.

ⁿ John x. 15.

blessings

blessings and gifts bestowed; he gives no less than the thing we are pleading for. ° *I give unto them, saith he, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* This love is further manifested in their cloathing and array; the church saith, ° *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath cloathed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.* There is a wonderful uniformity in Christ's love, and the effects or produce of it. As 'tis the highest love, it has done the greatest things, purchased heaven, and endowed them with the inheritance; and, while they remain as heirs under age, not being in full personal possession, and are clad and deck'd suitably, his speech is most endearing, full of love and affection: the book of *Canticles* abounds with expressions full of kindness, such as these, *my fair one, my love, my dove, my undefiled, my sister, my spouse,* and the like. But

The greatness of this love, is further manifested in the sympathy he has with them in their sorrows and sufferings; he calls from heaven with an audible voice, and awful display of majesty, to one when intent on destruction, ° *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou*

° John x. 28. ° Isai. lxi. 10. ° Acts ix. 4.

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me? he owns them, and his relation to them, calls them himself, and is tender of them as a man of his members; looks on himself offended, when any violence is used to them, or contempt cast upon them^r. Tho' he be ascended, yet he is not such ^s *an high-priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities*. As by his Israel, formerly, in their wilderness state, when in his love and his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old; so now doth he by all his members, whom he stiles *his lambs, his jewels, his soul's delight*.

The desire he hath shewn, yea, still retains, that they may be with him, to behold his glory, is a further evidence of their eternal glorification, or future everlasting happiness: ^t *he is gone before to prepare a place for you*: and he has thus promised, *I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also*. How cordially does he express himself to his disciples, when ready to depart from them for a season! surely, the language is suited to his behaviour to every member: ^u *Henceforth, saith he, I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my father, I have made*

^r 1 Cor. xii. 26.

^s Heb. iv. 15.

^t John xiv. 3.

^u Chap. xv. 15, 16.

known

known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Let me add hereunto his consolating news to his disciples, or rather the assurance he gave them, of what they were before acquainted with; and, in assuring them, he doth assure all his members also. ^w *And this, saith our Lord, is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. Again,* ^x *the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* If God be for us, who shall be against us? who can prevail against us? What force, what fraud, shall prevent us of the blessing? How well adapted are the words of the Psalmist, and how suitable for every member of Jesus to take up. *The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid.* Therefore the holy confidence of the church or prophet is agreeable under any distresses: ^y *I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.* Which last phrase, I apprehend, includes

^w John vi. 40.^x Chap. xvi. 27.^y Mic. vii. 7.

answer-

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answering. It is so, God is for them, thus loving of them, who is almighty, and all-sufficient; and, therefore, if they are not eternally glorified, this love must remove, become frustrate in its design, or become unactive: which things are contrary to all past behaviour, the experience of the saints, and the testimony of scripture; they must be finally happy. And thus am I led to another proof. The

2d. Proof of their eternal glorification, is, *The indissolubility of their Union with Christ, and the consequence thereof, which is the necessity of their being with him, when time shall cease.* The indissolubility of the Union has been attended to already; I shall now attend to the necessity of their being with him when time shall cease. And here I will not spend your time in fruitless enquiries, what God might have done, or what was in his power to do; but attend to what he has done, resolved to do, and reveal'd to us.

And then God hath inform'd us, that he hath prepared two places, for the final, everlasting reception of all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, all, every living soul that has been, now is, or shall be on the face of the earth, whether high or low, rich or poor. This the following passages of scripture fully prove. ** It is appointed unto*

* Heb. ix. 27.

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men once to die, but after this the judgment.
^a Tophet is ordain'd of old: yea, for the king
it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large:
the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the
breath of the Lord, like a stream of brim-
stone, doth kindle it. ^b Many of them that sleep
in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to
everlasting life, and some to shame and everlast-
ing contempt. Again, Christ hath told us,
that ^c when the Son of man shall come in his
glory, and all the holy angels with him, then
shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And
before him shall be gathered all nations; and
he shall separate them one from another, as
a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.
The issue of which separation, is given us in
the close of that account: ^d And these shall
go away into everlasting punishment; but the
righteous into life eternal. These scriptures
indicate a resurrection, and appearance be-
fore Christ the judge, and a final sentence
to be pass'd by him; also, that some will
be adjudged to endless misery, and that
others will be call'd to everlasting happi-
ness.

As God has appointed these different, opposite states, for all ranks and degrees, of all ages, and both sexes; so we have no reason to think of any other receptacle, although these habitations are represented in various

^a Isai. xxx. 33. ^b Dan. xii. 2. ^c Mat. xxv. 31, 32.
^d Ver. 46.

expres-

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expressions: nor is there room for us to dream of an annihilation, which is contradictory to the wisdom, justice and goodness of God. There are but two places, mention'd in scripture, for the everlasting reception of mankind, heaven and hell, and these import different states; states for ever unalterable, either of happiness or misery: the one place and state is represented as the most agreeable, and, as such, is the most desirable; the other, as the most disagreeable, and, therefore, with the greatest earnestness to be deprecated, and, with the greatest diligence, the way that leads thither is to be shunned. Now, as there are but two places of everlasting residence, the most agreeable situation, must of necessity be theirs who are united to Christ; which condition is, in other words, *eternal life, everlasting happiness, joys unutterable, pleasures unspeakable, ravishing, delighting, ever satiating, never fading, never cloying, honours, never changing*, but the blissful scene is one eternal *Now*.

When the great, the awful, the tremendous day shall come; the solemn trumpet sound; and the majestick voice be heard, that bids the whole race of *Adam* rise, and come to judgment: when the judge is set, it will be no difficult matter, then, to know the place, he will assign those, who, having loved him, have lived reproach'd, de-

spised, persecuted, expired on the racks, or in flames, or amidst cruel tortures for his sake, the honour of his father's law, and because they would not defile the temple of God. 'Twill be no great risk, should we adventure to predetermine, where those, who have spent their lives sorrowing, on account of their corruptions, mourning over their transgressions, and bewailing their own and others sins; from whom showers of tears have fallen, because men make void the law of their God, do not honour the Son, despise the riches of his grace, shall find a place: nor, where those shall have a place, who, by the grace of God, have had their conversation in all godliness and honesty, as those who looked for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; those, who, from grace imparted, and the kind influences and aids of the Holy Spirit, have long maintained a conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and were assured by the sacred scriptures, that they should not wrestle, or run at an uncertainty. Nor will it be more difficult to nominate the best place as their portion, who have had communion with the root Christ Jesus, that derive sanctification from him, that have a robe of perfect righteousness put on them, that which Jesus wrought out, that are prepared for the heavenly inheritance, who, as living members of a living head, have manifested their divine original.

In

In a word, if there be but two places of final, everlasting reception, and no annihilation, the united must have a place in one of them, and surely it will be in the chosen, the desirable: 'tis no great matter what it is term'd, because where the members are, there will the head be also, as there can be no separation from it; nor will there then, be any such clogs or mediums as now. And as in him dwells the fullness of deity, so the effulgency thereof, issuing forth upon every member, every beholder will make perfect bliss, such as, to us, is yet unknown. But, we know, we are assured, that heaven is his throne, his dwelling place, his purchase, his inheritance; there he is; thence he will descend; thither he will return, with the shouts of triumph, and all his saints, all his members with him, encompassed by the heavenly hosts. But I proceed.

3dly, A third proof of their everlasting happiness, arises, from *the certainty of his body being compleat, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, both in respect of sanctification and number*: then this mystical body shall appear, *not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*. His fullness cannot be compleat without every member. The absence of the least, or that which appears to us, the least serviceable,

° Eph. v. 27.

would

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would be a defect; which is impossible, where infinite wisdom presides over, almighty power upholds, and faithfulness executes the design. Then, how evident is glorification an effect of Union, and how certain! Again,

As our Lord hath discharg'd hitherto the trust committed to him with faithfulness, as he appeals to heaven saying, '*Holy Father, ---while I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me, I have kept; so will our Lord continue to do, until the last, and then, delivering up the charge, will, most openly, manifest, his having executed the covenant enter'd into between them both. It will be like saying, in the presence of the Father, and his holy angels (if not, also, in the presence of wicked men and devils) * Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me: or, as address'd to the Father, ' Here, most ' holy and righteous Father, is my trust, ' my covenant ones, my purchase, my ' spouse, my offspring, my mystical body; ' and here we claim, according to thine ' own eternal purpose, thy covenant grant, ' original design, to dwell for ever, under ' the radiancy of thy face, without a cloud ' to interrupt. I have made an end of sin, ' vanquish'd hell, destroy'd death, according ' to my engagements; and here, holy Fa-*

^f John xvii. 11, 12.

^g Heb. ii. 13.

^h ther,

‘ther, are the spoils, the trophies, those
 ‘brought out of captivity; here are the de-
 ‘fired, the promised seed, the objects of
 ‘thine everlasting love; and, now, may
 ‘^h they all be one, as thou, Father, art in
 ‘me, and I in thee; that they also may be
 ‘one in us:---Father, I will, that they also
 ‘whom thou hast given me, be with me where
 ‘I am; that these may behold my glory, which
 ‘thou hast given me.’ The

4th and last argument I shall urge, is drawn from *the possession he hath already taken of heaven, in their name, and his own right; his promise to them, in the words of our text; and the assurance given, that he will receive them to himself.* He is ascended into heaven, as the head, and representative of all that do, or shall hereafter believe on him; hence God is said, *to have raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:* he entred as our fore-runner; he went into the holiest of all, as our priest and advocate; agreeable hereunto the apostle speaking of heaven, saith, ^k *Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even Jesus, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* He bears our names on his ^l breast now (as the high-priest of the Jews did those of the tribes in his breast-plate) as those whom he represents, those for whom he appears to plead, those for whom he ever intercedes.

^h John xvii. 21, 24. ⁱ Eph. ii. 6. ^k Heb. vi. 20.

^l Chap. ix. 24.

He entred heaven in his own right, as God, which right is, indeed, incommunicable; but he entred, also, in right of his merits and sufferings, as having purchased it; and so he bestows this, which is his right, on, and communicates it unto his members; as such, 'tis called, *the^m purchased possession*.

His promise to them is, that *because he lives, they shall live also*; which certainly includes a life of justification, sanctification, and of glorification. Although the promise doth not imply a sameness of degree, in each of these, yet it implies, that as Christ doth, live each of these, they shall, in some degree; and the least degree of glorification, through eternity, will be infinite happiness.

Again, the assurances he hath given them hereof are very strong; as, that *whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall never die*: that in his *Father's house are many mansions*, and, if it were not so, he would have told them. Further, that he went *to prepare a place for them*, and if he went and prepared a place for them, he would come again and receive them to himself, that where he was there they might be also. Jesus hath thus spoken: *Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children,*

^m Eph. i. 14.
^p Mark x. 29, 30.

ⁿ John xi. 26.

^o Chap. xiv. 2, 3.

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or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time,---and in the world to come, eternal life.

Agreeable hereunto, the apostle tells us, ^a *this is the record, that God hath given to us, eternal life; and this life is in his Son.*

He that hath the Son, hath life. As Jesus hath engaged and ensured our final perseverance, so hath he also the reward of obedience, which is to us of grace, not of debt.

^r *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne:*

suitable hereunto is the ascription of the beloved disciple; ^s *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever:* the Lord God will be their

light, ^t *and they shall reign for ever and ever.* And, as a pledge of these things future, he hath given us his Spirit at present;

^u *after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

I come now, as proposed, to consider their advances to eternal glorification in some stages; and may add their entrance into it.

^p 1 John v. 11, 12.

^r Rev. iii. 21.

^s Chap. i. 5, 6.

^t Chap. xxii. 5.

^u Eph. i. 13, 14.

1st, Glorification is consider'd as immediate sometimes, and then 'tis in this life; as we hinted before, in the communication of grace, and the participation of benefits and privileges, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Though, indeed, the consolations of the Spirit, the greatest discoveries that believers have in this life, of the glory of God, or the sweetest foretastes of the heavenly happiness, fall vastly short of what the enjoyment is in heaven. If the things themselves are the same in kind, yet, from the imperfections of our present state, there are great alloys added to them. There is no grace so large, as that it hath not some corruption, attending the exercise of it, and mixing in the acts of it, and so far; that frequently we cry out with the church, *We are all as an unclean thing, our righteousnesses fade as doth the leaf, and our iniquities as the wind have taken us away.* And the degree of glory, at present, is but small: 'tis no more, in proportion to that above, or the uninterrupted fruition of God, than as an earnest to the whole sum, due in payment; or as the *first fruits* to the whole *harvest* ^w. Indeed, we who have been thus far happy, have a great deal of reason to bless God, ^x *who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* All the

^w Rom. viii. 23.^x 2 Cor. i. 22.

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views we can have, here, of the promised land, are by the medium of faith, and we are at a great distance; we take our prospect from *Nebo*, or *Pisgab's* top, insomuch, that, when it pleases God to help that eye, we must conclude, with the apostle, that *now we see through a glass darkly*: and wait, with the Psalmist, for the time of compleat satisfaction, until we *awake with his likeness*; when we shall see *face to face*, and know even as we are known. Are our affections raised sometimes, by any illapse of light, beaming upon, or being let into our souls, by any sheddings abroad of divine love there? These, are drops from that river of which the Psalmist speaks, in his declaration concerning the goodness of the Lord, to those that put their trust under the shadow of his wings^a: *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.* And all of this kind, that we enjoy here, is but in that proportion which a drop, or a few drops bear to a river: rivers, great rivers are measurable; but man hath not heard, no eye hath seen, no heart can conceive, either the number or the measure of those joys and blessings, that God hath prepared for him

^y 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

^z Psal. xvii. 15.

^a Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

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that waiteth for him ^b. Some have most
spiritual enjoyments in some periods *in life*,
and others, at the period *of Life*. With
some, the morning of conversion has been
the most delightful season they ever enjoyed;
their consolations were then strong, and
their comforts numerous; their hearts were
then so enlarged, and their affections so rais-
ed towards God in Christ; towards Christ,
as the beloved of their souls, that they could
joyfully, and intrepidly have followed him
in a ^c *wilderness, in a land that was sown*.
When they have lain down in the evening,
their faith has comfortably embraced their
beloved; when they awoke in the morning,
there was a song of praise put into their
mouths; their joys have run high, and for
many days, they scarcely knew an intermis-
sion of them. Some have most enjoy'd
God, have had most communion with him,
in times of great outward distress and per-
plexity; when storms have been without,
they have enjoy'd most of God and Christ,
through the Spirit, within: their case has
not been unlike that of those the author to the
Hebrews mentions, ^d who took joyfully the
spoiling of their goods, endured a great fight
of afflictions, knowing that they had in
heaven, an enduring substance. They
have set up their memorials, not only to re-
member a merciful deliverance, but also

^b Isai. lxiv. 4.

^c Jer. ii. 2.

^d Heb. x. 32, 34.

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the abundant comforts of a gracious God. Others have seen, felt, and known most of God, during some sickness, lingering illness or confinement. And some, God hath reserved their best things, till the close of life; he has handed forth such sweets on their dying beds, that though the messenger, Death, has had them by the hand, ready to bring them to the promised rest, they have thought the time long, very long, till got into possession. While their joys, their unknown joys, have forbid their friends to ask their lives, their ravish'd souls have breath'd forth, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; thy chariot wheels, how long they stay!* But thus am I led, in the progression, to consider,

2dly, Another advance, or stage of glorification, *viz.* the soul, as separate from the body; death having done its office, loosed the cords, and taken down the tabernacle, dislodged the soul, spoiled its habitation. The Union with Jesus is still firm, and now more manifest to her. We can no sooner say, the soul of a believer has left the body, than we may pronounce her happy, for ever happy, happy beyond expression, and without interruption; 'tis perfectly happy, and as compleatly so as she may be without the body. She no sooner steps out of the wilderness of this world, but she is in the *Canaan* of the better; where she is made perfect in holiness, and beholds the
face

face of God in light and glory ; serves him without intermission, enjoys him without interruption. ^d *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens : where we shall be, in a peculiar manner, with ^e God the judge of all, and the Spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.* Oh ! could we but follow the opening scene ; have leave to strike our tents, and enter those mansions, would we not even follow our thoughts into the joy of our Lord ?

3dly, It remains now, as I hinted, to consider the entrance into, or the beginning of the whole saints, or the whole man's eviternal and compleat glorification, both of soul and body, at the glorious morning of the resurrection. Then the dead in Christ shall rise first^f, as an effect of their relation to, and Union with him, and a farther manifestation of his regard to them. ^g *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first.* And ^h *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God,*

^d 2 Cor. v. 1.
^g 1 Theff. iv. 16.

^e Heb. xii. 23, 24.
^h Rev. xx. 6.

^f 1 Cor. xv. 20.

and

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and of Christ. He is risen as the first fruits, and “ⁱ the bodies of the just, by the Spirit
“ of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrecti-
“ on, as their head, shall be raised in power,
“ spiritual and incorruptible, and made like
“ to his glorious body.” Indeed, all the dead are raised by his power, but these in virtue of his headship, his promise in the text, and by the immediate, peculiar, and discriminating agency of that Spirit, which wrought in them when living: ^k *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* He’ll raise again those temples he once inhabited, gloriously fit them up, adorn, and inhabit them for ever.

And those that have not seen corruption at this glorious time, that have not tasted death, they ^l *shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.* Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with those that rise first ^m *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* What tongue can express what the joy of saints will be at that season? What heart can conceive, even after long meditation, what blessings, what hap-

ⁱ *Assemblies Catechism, Answ. 87.*

^k *Rom. viii. 11.*

^l *1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.*

^m *1 Thess. iv. 17.*

piness, what unknown pleasures, are contained in those words, *Ever with the Lord?* Then will God spare them; and their enemies may see, that God will spare them, ⁿ *as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Then shall the wheat be gathered into the garner, the jewels be lodg'd in the cabinet.*

Then they will appear bright and truly glorious; will have no remainders of sin; will be divested of all infirmities, defects, or deformities. The body is now laid in the grave, polluted with the leprosy of sin, weak with disorders that sin hath brought upon it; but it shall be raised very different: ^o *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.* Then the Lord Jesus Christ, our saviour, ^p *shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.* Here suffer me to introduce the words of a learned and valuable author, who, speaking of the condition in which the body shall be raised, saith,

ⁿ Mal. iii. 17, 18.

^o 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

^p Phil. iii. 21.

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“^a Not subject to weakness by labour, de-
 “cays by age, to impotency and weakness
 “by diseases; but nimble, strong, active,
 “and that without renitency; ~~no~~ molesta-
 “tion, grief, pain, or lassitude; it is raised
 “a spiritual body, possessed and acted by
 “the Holy Spirit; and so far advanced to
 “the perfection of spirits, as to be free from
 “grossness, ponderosity, from needing rest,
 “sleep, or sustenance, and is fitted for a
 “spiritual and cœlestial state.” And, be-
 ing thus glorious, they shall hear these joyful
 words from the king, *“Come, ye blessed of
 my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
 you from the foundation of the world; and
 this Euge, “Well done, good and faithful
 servant, thou hast been faithful over a few
 things, I will make thee ruler over many
 things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:*
 readily they embrace the command, enter with
 humble joy, enlarged, and holy boldness;
 and there they shall for ever abide; these go
 “*into life eternal. Then shall the righteous
 shine forth as sun, in the kingdom of their
 Father: or, as it was revealed to Daniel,
 “the wise shall shine as the brightness of the
 firmament, and they that turn many to righ-
 teousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

^a *Ridley's body of divinity*, vol. ii. pag. 196.

^r Matth. xxv. 34, 23. ^s Ver. 46. ^t Chap. xiii. 43.
^u Dan. xii. 3.

And, no wonder, if *Moses's* face shone when he had been in the mount with God, that they shine, who continually dwell in his presence, under the effulgence of deity. Oh the radiancy thereof! the vision and fruition of deity! Oh the opening scenes of joy, and delights never ending! they now see God ^w *face to face*, know as they are known. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God*, saith the apostle, transported with the relation, ^x *and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*, have God unveil himself, through Christ, fill the creature full, brimful, and this for ever: this *for ever*, a word dreadful to the sinner, is the happiness of the saint.

There, in heaven, is the full and most compleat enjoyment of the sacred Three, that the creature is capable of receiving. Now, having received the crown of righteousness, saints, with harps in their hands, compleat in glory, will begin their never-ending songs. *A new song to God, and the lamb; to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own most precious blood, that hath redeemed us out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.* And will it not, then, be remembred, that as he loved us, and re-

^w 1 Cor. xiii. 12.^x 1 John iii. 2.

deemed

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deemed us, so also, that he united us to himself, engaged our hearts to devote themselves to him, and to avouch him ours; and that having wrought this in us, put the living spring there, the principle of life derived from himself, he ever maintain'd it, and carried it on against all opposition: and now, now 'tis compleated, he hath preserved us to his heavenly kingdom; and we'll ascribe to him all glory, honour, power, praise, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever.

** Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous.*

Some general inferences from the whole.

If this be the doctrine of Union as we have treated of; if Union with Christ is such as hath been explained, and the effects such as related;

Infer. I. How ought Jesus to be prized by every person that hopes for salvation? He is the foundation that God hath laid for his people to build their hopes upon; he is the fountain, the original of spiritual life, the purchaser of all blessings, the storehouse of all needful supply; he is the way of truth and life; yea, *all in all*. Well might the apostle say, *Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.*

He must needs be more than a creature, that can give life spiritual, to souls dead in

^z Psal. xxxii. 11.

^y 1 Pet. ii. 7.

trespasses and sins; who can maintain and carry it on when begun, though opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil; who can promise and give life, in the most extensive sense of the term: surely he is no less than *God over all blessed for evermore*. What can he be short of deity, to whom our likeness is the greatest felicity, and who has heaven to bestow, as a reward of his active and passive obedience; through whom, and through whom alone, God is reconciled to rebellious men, and in whom, and for whose sake, he takes them for his sons and daughters.

Is the doctrine of Union such as has been represented, both respecting its beginning and issue? then,

II. How well grounded is that hope which is placed in him, and that confidence which relies upon him for life and salvation. And, on the other hand, how unreasonable are the anxious fears of those *who have fled for refuge to lay hold on this hope set before them*: be their fears either respecting bodily or spiritual enemies or weaknesses; more strong and numerous are those that are for us, and our guard, than those that are against us. The ² prophet's servant who dreaded that part of the *Assyrian* army, sent to take his master, was comforted, by seeing

² 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

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the mountains covered with chariots and horsemen of fire for their defence. This is always the case of those united to Jesus, though the eyes of our body, or of our faith, may not always be opened to behold them.

^a *Are not they, the angels, all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* ^b *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

Should our fears suggest, that fallen angels are powerful, subtil, numerous, and may prevail, yet the scriptures furnish an answer full to the purpose, and that admits of no scruple. ^c *There is none like unto the God of Jesurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.* This is the case, the portion, the happiness of all the spiritual Israel, the holy seed, the united to Christ; and yet, I doubt not, but unbelief can find, or invent some means to make our souls frequently uneasy. The enemy of our souls, and of our Lord's glory, can furnish us with a variety of questionings, whilst unbelief listens to them. When we give way to these unreasonable fears, how forgetful do we seem

^a Heb. i. 14. ^b Psal. xxxiv. 7. ^c Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27.

to be of our Lord's words, and our relation to him? ^a *All power, saith he, is given unto me in heaven and earth.* How can we sink united to him? Does not he love his members? hath not he manifested it abundantly? Will not his love cause him to exert his power for their preservation? Surely it will. He hath ^e *the keys of hell and of death.* Our grand enemies are his captives, his prisoners in chains, and how can they prevail? Their power is bounded according to his will. Him ^f *God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* And, will not Jesus preserve, and at last raise up all his members? How can we entertain any doubts concerning it, without blushing? Surely we must, when we remember his love, and his constant remembrance of us: We are as *a seal upon his arm.* Add to these, his faithfulness, and the great things he hath done for us.

III. From the whole, how unjust, how unkind and dishonourable, are the jealousies, the suspicions of the poor trembling saint, who is sometimes ready to think, that *his Jesus* will reject him, will not own him at the last day; and all this, because, that notwithstanding all his watchfulness, his strivings, his prayers, he is carried away

^a Matth. xxviii. 18.^e Rev. i. 18.^f Acts ii. 24.

many times, by the power of temptation, the breaking forth of his corruptions; and, therefore, saith the trembling and disquieted soul, I fear, that at last, when I knock and say, ^g *Lord, Lord, open*, he will say unto me, *Verily, I know thee not*. Alas, soul, he did not choose thee, any more than his *Israel* of old, for thy beauty or excellency: they were weak and few in number, and thou wast in thy blood, when he passed by, cast his skirt over thee, and bid thee live: and having set his love upon thee, purchased thee with his blood, united thee to himself, sent forth virtue into thy soul from himself; he will *never leave nor forsake thee*. Revolve the effects of Union again in thy mind. Thou mayst, indeed, justly mourn, because thou canst serve him no better, canst be no more humbled under the view of thy rising offences: yet, remember thy head is full of compassion towards thee, as well as he manifested himself to be towards his *Israel* of old. 'Tis recorded of him, that ^h *he being full of compassion forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, or multiplied turning it away, and did not stir up all his wrath.* ⁱ *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembred:*

^g Mat. xxv. 11, 12.

^h Psal. lxxviii. 38.

ⁱ Psal. cxi. 4, 5.

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the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
He hath given meat unto them that fear him:
he will ever be mindful of his covenant. Re-
 member he is thy righteousness and strength,
 that all supplies are in his hands, and that
 thy Union with him is indissoluble. Art
 thou, in thine own apprehension, in thy
 self, miserable, poor, and blind, and naked?
 Look also what thou art in him, and what
 he is to thee; for thy sake, as well as others,
^k *though he was rich, yet he became poor,*
that ye through his poverty might be rich;
 and, shall not the end take place? You
 have a rich, a royal grant made you; *all*
things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos,
or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or
things present, or things to come, all are yours,
and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And
 as all these are yours, you shall partake of
 them in God's time and way, fret not thy
 self, O soul, tho' many dispondencies arise,
 but wait with patience; pray for faith and
 patience; *wait on the Lord,* and thou mayst,
 in a little while, call upon thy soul, ¹ *Bless*
the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his
benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities:
who healeth all thy diseases.---Who crowneth
thee with loving kindness and tender mer-
cies.

IV. Those united to the Lord Jesus Christ,
 how comfortably may they rest on him *in*

^k 2 Cor. viii. 9. ¹ Psal. ciii. 2—4.

life,

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life, amidst all the hurries, storms and temptations they may meet with, seeing such are admitted to go ^m up from the wilderness, leaning upon their beloved. Jesus will shew as much regard for their safe conduct through this howling wilderness, as he did for Israel of old, whom he made ⁿ to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. Suffer me to introduce the Psalmist's recognition of God's dealing with the children of Jacob, as applicable to those united to the Lord Jesus Christ; ° O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. They wander'd in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. He never forsook them, was still nigh at hand; though he tried them, and suffered them to hunger and thirst, he heard their prayer, granted their request; and so it may and will be said, concerning all and each of the united; and though many of the

^m Cant. viii. 5.

ⁿ Psal. lxxviii. 52.

° Psal. cvii. 1—6.

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providences, by which *Israel* was exercised in the wilderness, were difficult to be understood, hard to be accommodated, by them, to his declared design, and their expected end; yet our author tells us, *ⁱ he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.* And, however his providence may appear to us, he is still doing the same by all the united. And, as they may thus lean, trust, rely and rest in life, how comfortably and calmly, may such, at the last period thereof, incline to sleep in the bosom of Jesus, who is *⁹ the resurrection and the life*; and he that believeth in him, *though he were dead, yet shall he live*: Moreover if we consider what the apostle hath affirmed, they must do so, when their faith speaks his words, at that season: *ⁱ For I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Such an one, being a believer, is assured that he shall not come into condemnation, but is already *ⁱ passed from death to life.* When they thus expire, thus close their eyes, resign their breath, and fall asleep in Jesus,

ⁱ Psal. cvii. 7. ⁹ John xi. 25. ⁱ Rom. viii. 38, 39.
ⁱ John v. 24.

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is not our language, or the sentiment of our soul, like that of *Thomas*, who, when our Lord said, *Lazarus slept*; or (as he after explain'd it) was dead, and manifested great love to him, said, to his companions, '*Let us also go, that we may die with him.*'

The Lord grant we may go on and live in Jesus, and then we shall sleep in him at death, and be found with him at his right hand, in the resurrection. Would to God this might be the happy case of all who may have attended these discourses. Amen.

* John xi. 16.

F I N I S.



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